

A
SERIOUS ITEM
TO
Secure Sinners:

O R,
G O D discovered to be as well
a Burning as a Shining Light.

By J. B. M. A.

Isai. 10. 17.

*And the light of Israel shall be for a fire,
and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall
burn and devour his thornes and his briers
in one day.*

LONDON,

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H E B. 12. verse 29.

For our God is a consuming fire.

He Holy Scriptures of truth, in which the Supream Law-giver, giveth out his Royal commands to the rational creature, for service, do also propound to the obedient and faithful very many things by way of encouragement; we may content our selves at present with the particular instance given by the Holy Ghost in the verse before the Text; where you have a great Command for duty inforced upon the conscience, by an argument drawn from the freeness of the Grace of God towards Believers, in full promises, and in faithfull accomplishments: As there is receiving from God, so there must be rendring to God; we must practically use and improve, what the Lord doth mercifully give and bestow; as his favors do oblige, so they should affect our hearts, be as oyle to the wheel, set it going and running, and mightily provoke to close and humble walking before this Gracious God all our days. Shall God be so rich in mercy, so large-handed to us, as to give us a Kingdom, and shall we think any thing too much that we can do for him? Wherefore receiving a Kingdom let us serve God acceptably

P. B. 45.

with

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with reverence and godly fear, and so on.

But why, may some say, is the Commandment so urgent and pressing? Must such as have received a Kingdom, serve? Must such as the Lord hath promoted to great spiritual honor and dignity, be subject, and that also with fear and trembling?

Yes, and you may see very good reason for it, if you look a little further, *For our God is a consuming fire.* Service you do owe, service God doth require; it may reasonably be expected, and it should carefully be performed; though Spiritual Kings are the Lords freemen, yet they

Psal. 119.

45.

are to be the Lords servants too; your liberty is for service, and your service is liberty; your state of rule is not such as doth exempt you from obedience to earthly Kings, much less from obe-

Rom. 13. 1

dience to the King of kings, and to the Lord of lords.

But how may it be said of Believers here, that as such, they have received a Kingdom?

Answer, all Christs willing and hearty Subjects, are Kings, *Revel. 1. 6.* This is not the honor only of some, but of all the Saints, they are partakers of the glorious conquests of Christ over Satan, and Sin, and Death, they have a dominion over these; they are translated out of the Kingdom of darkness, into the Kingdom of the dear Son of God. *Col. 1. 13.* Their iniquities are subdued, and they may triumph over all the troubles and afflictions of this life and over death, and over the grave; the Saints of the Most High, have such a Kingdom. But Secondly,

Believers have received another Kingdom too, I mean the Kingdom of Glory; they have it by

Faith,

Faith, which maketh things absent, as if they were Heb. 11. 1. present, and is said to be *the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.*

They have, Thirdly, the Beginnings of it too; they have Grace, which is glory begun, they have the first-fruits, a fore-taste, they have the earnest penny, they have it in promise, they have it in Christ, the Members are in their Head sitting already in *Heavenly places*; they have it in hope Ephes. 1. 6 and the time doth make haste in which they shall have it in possession; and this State into which the Covenant of Grace doth fix a sound Believer is such as he can never be removed from: And now judge I pray between the Lord and the Believer; may not God justly expect the whole time of the Saints life, to be employed in his service? Doth not all belong to him? He was bound to serve God before the Lord made him so honorable, and do not Gods distinguishing mercies further engage, and bind faster knots, and lay stronger cords of love upon him, to draw him after Christ in the way of his duty?

And know this, by the way, that your care to serve God, should be according to his excellent Greatness; you must not do his work slightly, but set to it with all your might, and with all humbleness of mind and holy fear; his goodness should awe you, his love and kindness should Hos. 3. 1. last conquer and overcome you to the Lord more; and you must serve him with fear, because of the terribleness of his excellent and most Sovereign Majesty; *For our God is a consuming fire.* Chew the cud of meditation well upon this, and it may be found by experience to have a great influence

upon thee, to help forward seriousness in the profession of Religion, which is so greatly wanting.

Here is a great deal of choice matter in these few words, *Our God*, the God whom Believers are reconciled to, and are in Covenant with, whose heart is full of tender love to his people, and the bowels of whose compassion are yearning towards them, who pities them more than an earthly Parent can possibly pity his children; who hath given them such a glorious and rich Kingdom; who hath done much for them already, but promised more which he hath laid up in store; even, this *our God, is a consuming fire*.

In the Text are two reasons of the exhortation in the Twenty eighth verse; one drawn from the terribleness of Gods Majesty, *he is a consuming fire*: The second is drawn from the relation which is between God and his people, *Our God*. What a strange Title is this of the Great God that we meet with in this place? we know God is not properly fire, it must therefore be taken metaphorically: Fire is a very terrible and dreadful creature; things endure much pain, such as are sensible I mean, when they are cast into the fire; 'tis here affirmed of God, that he is *consuming* or *devouring fire*; the word in the original, καταναλίσκος, is doubly compounded, and so the signification is augmented and increased; **G**od will utterly consume all those that hate him, they shall be destroyed irrecoverably, and without remedy, be made a prey of, and swallowed up with his fury and indignation: We have

have the same expression *Deut. 4. 24.* and the word there rendred *consuming*, doth properly signifie *eating*; it comes from a root which signifies *did eat*, and by a Metaphor it signifies to *consume* *A. ba. 7* or *destroy*: God is fire, and eating-fire; they are as it were bread for his wrath, as it were meat proper for that to feed upon: some of them eat *Psalm. 14. 4.* up his people, as they eat up bread; and this fire will eat up all the wicked, as it were like bread.

The words will yield a great many observations; as, First of all, *That the Lord is a Believers God in a special manner.*

Secondly, *They who denounce the wrath of God against others in the case of disobedience, should reflect inwardly upon themselves, and turn the edge of their threatening against their own souls in the like case: Our God, my God, and your God, is a consuming fire: If you to whom I speak, turn your spirits against him, and thrust away his word, and will not suffer it to bear the sway and rule in your hearts, and so judge your selves unworthy of eternal life, he will destroy you; and if I should cast away his fear, and not serve him acceptably with Reverence, take no heed to walk in his Law with all my heart, he would consume me too.*

Thirdly, *Though the most high doth stand in a very near relation to his people, yet he hath not laid aside his Majesty, nor freed his people from an awful respect to him.*

Fourthly, *Tis not unsuitable to a Gospel-State, nor to a Gospel-Ministry, to press to duty by arguments drawn from the terrible and dreadfulfulness of Gods wrath and vengeance.*

Fifthly, *That God is a consuming fire, very dreadful and terrible in his justice to the wicked:* In one place or other I may, if God will, speak to most of these observations. The last is chiefly intended; yet I am willing to speak something Doctrinally and by way of Application unto the first also; the rest may fall into the Application of the last Doctrine.

God is the
Believers
God.

To begin with the first, and to speak a little distinctly unto that, *That the Lord is the Believers God in a special manner.* God doth name himself, the God of such; 'tis a very comfortable name that which God doth assume to himself, *The God and of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob*, Exod. 3.6. and Matth. 22. 32. The God of all of them, and the God of each of them, and the God of every one that walks in the steps of the Faith of *Abraham*: This God is the God of his whole *Israel*; a God of *Israel*, and a God to *Israel*, and elsewhere he is said to be *Zions God, even thy God, O Zion*, Psal. 146. 10. That may be understood more generally, as we may hear further anon; or more specially, with respect to the Believers, that were in the Church. The Lord is the God of this and that particular Church, and so of other particular Churches in other places; Christ our Lord both theirs and ours: The Church of *Corinth* had the honor of having the *Lord for their God* but the like honor and happiness had other Churches also; but not to enlarge here.

The Lord is the God of every believing Soul; *Psal. 5. 2. Hearken to the voice of my cry, my King and my God*; and Thomas said, *My Lord and*

and my God: This is the greatest promise in all the Scripture, which we find *Heb. 8. 10. I will be your God*: and 'tis the common enjoyment of all that are sanctified by Faith in Jesus Christ: There is more implied in this, then I am able to express; I will be a Father, and a Husband, and Friend to you; I will do you good here, and take you to my self in heaven hereafter; I will give you grace and glory, all the Blessings made over in the rich Charter of my new Covenant, purchased by my Son, and sealed by my Spirit; they are your portion, *all is yours.* 1 Cor. 3. 21.

But some may say, *Is not God the God of all the world, as well as the God of Believers? Why should you appropriate that to any sort of persons which the Scripture seems to leave in common? Is not he the God of Jews and Gentiles, and particularly of every one that hath his name named upon him?*

This would require a large answer, but some other thing being more intended from this Scripture, I must briefly pass it over.

First of all, God is the God of all the world: *2 Kings 19. 15, And Ezekiah prayed and said, O Lord God of Israel, thou art God of all the Kingdoms of the earth; and so Jerem. 32. 27, Behold I Jehovah, Lord, or God, of all flesh; God is the Creator of all, and he will be the Judge of all, Psal. 48. 11. And he is the Preserver of all, Psal. 36. 6.* And in this sense I understand those expressions, *1 Tim. 4. 10. He is the Saviour of all men, the Supporter, Nourisher, and the common Preserver and Upholder of all;* but he exerciseth special acts of Providence to-

wards the Godly, and therefore it follows, *especially of them that believe.*

But then secondly, God is the God of his Church, of all that name his name, and profess subjection to his word, and live under the external administration of his Holy Covenant; these are as a Garden inclosed, and paled in from the *Heathen-world*; he is so their God, as he is not the God of the *Pagans*; very often in the Scripture the Lord is called, *The God of Israel*, 1 Sam. 6. 5. and 20. 12. and *Moses* was to say to *Pharaoh* concerning that people, *Israel is my son, my first born*; and they are said to be *the Lords portion*, and the *lot or line*, as in the *Hebrew*, of *his Inheritance*; and he was said to be their God, *their own God*: The *Jews* were of old a privileged people, above all the people of the world; when Christ came and preached Salvation to them, 'tis said, *he came to his own*, John 1. 11. Christ had a common Interest in all mankind, as their Maker; but he had a more peculiar Interest in his visible Church, than in any other people, and they had such an Interest in God, as *Heathens* had not; and hereupon they were said to be *a people near unto him*, Psal. 148. last verse: whereas other people were afar off, and being *Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel*, were said to be *without God in the world*, Ephes. 2. 12. To the *Israelites* pertained the *Adoption*, and the *Glory*, and they were called *the children of the Kingdom*, Matt. 8. 12. Of the Body of the people which came out of the land of *Egypt*, it was said, *that God went to redeem a people to himself*; and now *Zions Tents* being enlarged, there

there be many visible companies of people in the world, and great bodies of them also, who are the Lords people by Profession, and have in such a sense *the Lord for their God*, as the wild *Indians* and many others have not ; but the truth is, many of these who are children of the Kingdom, being without the wedding Garment, shall be cast out into utter darkness, though God may own them here as to some outward Covenant-Administrations, yet he will say to them at last, *Depart from me ye workers of iniquity*, *Matt. 7. 23.* *I never knew you*, not for Sheep, though I knew you for Goats ; not for Saints, though I knew you for Sinners ; though you had my outward mark, yet you had not my inner mark ; though you named my Name, yet you would not depart from Iniquity ; and therefore though heretofore I said in the Ministry of my word, *Come* ; yet now I say, *Depart* : Many say, *Lord, Lord*, to whom he will say *Depart*, not to here and there a person only ; but to many, yea to most of those who call themselves Christians : But of this a little more anon.

Thirdly, though the Body of a people professing the Christian Religion, may in a peculiar way, as they stand in opposition to Heathens, be said to have *the Lord for their God*, yet there be among these a remnant who are in a stricter acceptance the people of God, and his treasure, and portion, and in a more special manner set apart by God, and have him in a more peculiar way for their God, then others of them, yea, then all those who adhere to Christ only, by some outward Profession : The Lord was *David's God*,

so as he was not the God of *Saul*, and his wicked complices; he was *Peters* God, so as he was not *Judas* his God: There is, in a strict sense, a peculiar people among those who are in a common and large sense a peculiar people; all that belong to an earthly King any way, are not his compared. Favourites; nor all that are Soldiers, of the Princes Life-guard; every Daughter of *Jerusalem* was not *Solomons* Spouse, and so not every one that professeth of himself that he belongeth to the King of Glory, is the Heavenly Kings Favorite, such a one as he takes into his bosom, and makes special discoveries of his mind to, though there may be some kind of wedding, yet very few are coupled to the Lord by the Spirit, and Faith; what shall I say? every thing in a Garden is not a Flower? every thing in a Field, is not good corn: There was a wicked *Cham* in *Noahs* Family, and a prophane *Esau* in *Isaacs* Family; weeds grow thick in the Garden of the Church, and there be great heaps and bundles of tares among the wheat; the Gospel-Net which we spread, wraps in good and bad, *Matt. 13.* There is abundance of chaffe among the corn that shall be gathered into the Barn.

All are not Israel, that are of Israel, Rom. 9. 6. The Seed of the Serpent grows up together with the seed of the woman; men born after the flesh, with those that are born after the Spirit: Indeed the time will come, and will not tarry, in which the Lord will weed his garden, and pluck up every thing that offendeth, and them that do iniquity: The Church-Floor may be purged much yet in this world, but hereafter not any

any chaffe shall lie among the wheat; though the tares may be let alone a while, yet at last they shall be gathered, and bundled together, and be burnt, *Mat. 13.30.* The All-knowing God will separate between Cattel and Cattel; he will put the sheep by themselves, and the goats by themselves; we may be deceived, but God cannot be mocked; these be mine, enter into the Joy of the Lord; these are not mine, and though they knock, they will find the door shut, they would not here open the door of their hearts to God, *Mat. 25. 10* and God will not open the door of his glory unto them; The Lord knows gold from copper, and silver from tinne and lead; he can spy out a pearl though it be covered over with much rubbish; and he knows a Wolf though it be in sheeps clothing; and swine to be swine, though they should be washed from the mire; he can discern the Ministers of Satan, though they should transform themselves into the Ministers of Righteousness: God hath set a privy mark upon all that *2 Tim. 2. 19.* are his, and so cannot but know such as are his; he can discern a Vessel of dishonor, though it be gilted, from a Vessel of honor; and pick out a Vessel of mercy, and set it in the place appointed for it, though it hath lain long among the pots; he can cull out those that are Christs, from those who were like them much, in respect of outward conversation, though not in respect of gracious dispositions; I shall allude to that place, *1 Kings 3. 22.* where we read of a woman whose child was dead, that laid claim to the child of another woman, who lived in the house with her, but the woman whose child was alive, said,

said, *Not the dead, but the living child is mine* ; so saith God when some would put a dead child, a dead person into his bosom, Nay saith God, that is none of mine, I will have none of that, I know whom I have chosen, and whom I have stamped my Image upon; the living child is mine, and the person that must inherit my kingdom ; the living child, who hath the Spirit of Life dwelling in him, and quickening him inwardly to walk before me in newness of life.

And this being dispatcht, I may a little touch upon some things, to shew the difference between a sound Believer, and an Ungodly man, as to the matter in hand.

As First of all, the person who hath the Lord for his God, in the strictest sense, is a child of God ; not by common and external Adoption only, but by saving Faith in Christ Jesus, *Gal. 3. 26.*

Secondly, He is not only under an outward dispensation of the Covenant, but under an internal Covenant-relation to God also : The Lord hath apprehended him by his Spirit, and caused him to approach to him, and he hath made through Grace, a resignation of himself to the Lord, no longer to be at his own dispose, but to be the Lord's ; *Cant. 2. 16. My beloved is mine, and I am his* : So *Rom. 14. 8. Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.*

Thirdly, God hath stamped upon his Covenant-graces, Faith, and Repentance, and the like.

Fourthly, These are set apart by God for himself in regard of Communion and Fellowship ; *Truly our Fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.* This is elsewhere expressed

by their *drawing near to God*, *Psal. 73, 28.* and by *manifesting of himself to them*, *John 14. 21.* God lets out himself to them, and they let out themselves to God; these let out themselves to him by Prayer, and Meditation, by panting, and breathing after him; they poure out their Souls, and let out their hearts into his bosom, and the Lord lets fall the dew of his Heavenly Grace, into their Souls; others may have converse with Ordinances, but these have Communion with the God of Ordinances; these have *the hidden Manna, the new Name, which no man knoweth but he that hath it*; these eate spiritually of the Bread which came down from Heaven; these drink of the water of Life, which will be springing-water, springing up to Everlasting Life; others may have the shell, and the husk, but these have the fatted calfe to eate of, and to make their Souls rejoyce with; others have but shaddows as it were, but these inherit and feed upon substance; they have meat which never perisheth, and food which endures to Eternal Life.

But here some may say, *How comes this to pass, that the Lord is the God of any, in such a special way as you have been speaking of?*

I answer in a few words; It is by *Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. the three last, and *John 14. 6.* The Lord is first the Father of Christ, and in and through him, the Believers Father: *John 20. 17. I ascend to my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God*; the Promises are in him, yea, and *Amen*; he is the Head of the New Race, Believers are his seed; he is the Foundation

tion of the New Covenant, and of all the rich and precious promises of it; 'tis his office to bring to God those that shall be saved; he drawes them to the Father; he hath undertaken to make all that the Father hath given to him, eternally happy, to bring them to a Spiritual enjoyment of God here by Faith, and to an everlasting enjoyment of him in glory, *John 6. 37. and John 18. 9.*

But if you enquire yet farther, *How doth Christ bring this about?*

I answer; By his Spirit, and his Word: by his Spirit as an Efficient; and by his Word, as a means: he doth convince sinners of the evil of *Acts 2. 37.* sin, and the danger they are in by the reason of *John. 16* it, and brings them also to Compunction for it, *8, 9, 10.* makes them to see their absolute need of Christ, and together Christs All-sufficiency to save, and his willingness to bestow Grace and Mercy; and he bowes the sinners heart, and by putting forth *Psalms 110* his power, makes him willing and able to receive *3.* the Lord, and to close with the terms upon which Salvation is offered in the preaching of the Gospel; he reveals his arm, and so inclines and bends the heart to consent, and the will to chuse the Lord for his God and portion; and so a special Interest in God is obtained: The Lord makes over himself in Jesus Christ, and the Believer in and thorough Christ, takes the Lord for his God, and so rests upon him for Life and for Salvation; and thus much for the Doctrinal part. I might be large in the Application, but I am willing to hasten to that which I principally aim at from the words,

Is the Lord the Believers God in a special manner, and is this such a large portion as hath been discovered? Then how much are they to blame who content themselves with an outward Covenant-relation only, to this great and glorious God; who stay as it were in the outward Court, but do not come into the inner Room, where the King of Saints feasteth his Spouse with the royal dainties of his house, where he satiateth the Soul of the weary, as with marrow and fatness: Oh my friends, what will it avail you to say, *We* Luk. 13.26 *have eaten and drunken in his presence; He hath taught in our streets, We were named the house of Jacob, Mic. 2. 7. He wrote to us the great things of his Law, we had his righteous Statutes, and Judgments among us; Oh the many Prayers we have made, and the many Sermons we have heard; our name hath been all along Christian, God hath spoken to us, as to his own people, he hath been dunging and dressing us a long time, we have a great many Church-Priviledges; what of all this, if the Lord be not thy God? If thou be not internally in covenant with him; what will the outward sign of the Covenant avail thee, if thou hast not covenant-Faith, and covenant-Obedience; if there be not the stamp and impression of Gods Image in Holiness upon thy Soul? Those who have the Lord for their God, he doth justify, and whom he doth justify, them he doth sanctifie; where he doth pardon sin, he doth purifie the heart: Now how is it, that thou who art yet in thy natural filthiness, art so quiet, and so much at ease? Thou doest hear of a better way, then thou doest yet conform to, why doest not thou*

not walk in it? Thou dost hear of a better frame, and of a better state that some others have; (I speak with respect to the gracious change which hath passed upon them, and the work of sanctifying Grace upon their Souls here:) Why dost not thou press after it? What is the matter that thou dost sit down short of God? Short of a saving Interest in Christ? Will outward privileges shelter and screen thee from the scorching heat of Gods wrath? Be not deceived; let not a deluded heart turn thee thus aside in thy confidence; do not trust upon that which will not profit. In some Countries, where the punishment for Malefactors hath been Burning, they were wont to pour something on them, on purpose to increase their torment: Let me tell you, the Church privileges, which the Gospel State doth advance you to, and you abuse and are unfruitful under, will serve to heighten and

Mat. 11. 23. increase the condemnation of such of you as perish; these shall have a hotter Hell then *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*; their sin being greater, their punishment shall be greater too: Let me intreat thee to charge this one serious following Question upon thy Soul, which the Lord by the Apostle

2 Jam. 14. *James* propoundeth to thy consideration; *What profit my Brethren, if any one say he hath Faith, but hath not works? Can that Faith save him?* As if he had said: Let me debate the matter with your consciences, do not put cheats upon your souls, do not take up, as many do, with shadows instead of substance; deal truly and faithfully with your selves: I pray tell me, Can an empty, naked Faith, a meer shew, and profession of Re-

any

ligion save you: 'Tis meer folly and vanity for any to expect Salvation for it; such a weighry frame and building as heavenly Glory cannot be raised upon such a weak and sandy foundation; Can that faith profit? a shadow of meat will as soon nourish the body, and a dream of water satisfie the thirst, as such a Faith save the Soule: Faith that is justifying will end in Salvation: No faith can save as a work; but faith that is right, consisting in a sincere accepting and relying upon Christ on Gospel terms, will save instrumentally; or Christ apprehended & received by it, will save; and this faith is a working faith: but that faith which is not working cannot save: think upon this and do not count it enough to believe in word, but believe indeed; though you come to a Profession, and come to Duty, yet if you come not to God too, you shall perish.

2. Is the Lord the Believers God? then he is on the surest and strongest side: there is more for him then is against him: What is Man Psal. 45. 3. that is a Worm, to the Holy One of Israel, Psal. 89. *who is mighty to save: yea, to whom all power is* *doth belong?* Psal. 62. 11. This is a truth so worthy of very deep and serious consideration: *One thing hath God spoken, or once; twice have I heard this, that strength, or power to God;* as 'tis in the Hebrew: Strength is his, 'tis one of the glorious Titles of God, *The Strength of Israel*, 1 Sam. 15. 29. the Hebrew word is *Netzach*, and it signifies the prevailing conquering strength, it comes from a root which signifies *he overcame*: And this strength

- of this mighty God is engaged for the Believers help: it followeth, *The Strength of Israel will not lie*; having in mercy given and pawned his Word of Promise, he will in truth and faithfulness perform it: *Eesai. 35. 4. Say to the fearful in heart. Be strong, fear not, behold your God will come*; and then again, *he will come and save*; and *Zeph. 3. 17, 18, 19. and so Psal. 12. 7. Thou shalt keep them, thou wilt preserve him*; that is, every one that is godly, from this generation for ever: Our God is a Sword, and a Buckler, and a Fortrefs, and a High Tower, and munitions of Rocks, and a Shield, and strong Holds, yea unspeakably more then all created strength: a weak Believer is *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, *Ephes. 6. 10. He is stronger in his God, then the thickest Arm of Flesh*, *2 Chron. 32. 8. He is stronger then the Strong M n armed, then Principalities and Powers of Darkness*: The least Affliction is too much for him to encounter with in his own strength, and the greatest is not too much for him to grapple with in the strength of his God: Gods grace is sufficient for him; and therefore he may glory in tribulation, and before-hand triumph in assured expectation of victory over the worst which the World, and the Flesh, and the Devil can do: Faith hath been a glorious Conquerour, it hath quenched the violence of Fire, and stopped the mouths of Lions, it hath born the brunt of many a hot day; this Shield hath beaten back *showrs of Arrows* many times, so that they have been *as cut*

in pieces, Psal. 58. 7. *This is the Victory whereby we overcome the World, even our Faith in our Strong God*, 1 Job. 5. 4. A Believer may well be bolder then a Lyon: What a triumphing passage is that of the Apostle, Phil. 4. 13. *I am able to do all things through Christ strengthening*, ενδυναμωμεν, or *impowring me!* A Believer having the Lord for his God, he need not be afraid of the son of man, who is but as the weak and withering grass, Esai. 51. 12. God is the comforter and strengthner of his People; How unsuitable and unbecoming is it for such as have this Almighty God for their Rock, to stand in fear of man, who hangs by the weak thread of a frail life over the Grave, and may quickly tumble in! Is it not reproachful to the strong God whom thou sayest is thy Confidence, to be a fraid of such a one? See Psal. 118. 6. *The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me*: Some men it may be may say as the expressions are in the Book of Psalms, *Persecute and take him, for there is no help for him in his God*, Psal. 32. But the Believer is not so easily beaten off from his confidence, as the world would have him; See the next verse, *But thou O Lord art a Shield for me, my glory, and the lifter up of my head*: Senacherib said to Hezekiah, *Let not thy God deceive thee in whom thou trustest*, Esai. 37. 10. and Rabshakeh, said to the people, *Let not Hezekiah deceive you, and make you trust in the Lord*: And is there not the same spirit of Blasphemy in the mouths of many now?

but say others what they will, our God will help; he will come and save, and execute the judgement that is written, upon those that hate him,

3. Is the Lord the Believers God? then it must needs be very dangerous for any to set himself against Believers; see *Jer. 2. 3. Israel is holiness to the Lord, all that devour him shall offend, evil shall come upon them; they that fight against them, fight against Christ, and it is hard to kick against the pricks; they that touch them to hurt them, hit God in a very tender place, touch the very Apple of his Eye, Zach. 2. 8.* They strike and wound Christ in the very bowels, and that will move compassion towards his People, and turn his wrath towards his Enemies: How much of the Saints blood hath Antichrist and his Instruments shed! and the Man of Sin is again bending his Bow, and making his Arrows ready to shoot the upright in heart; but God hath a Sword of Vengeance and Arrows too, and he ordains them against such, *Psal. 7. 13. The Man of Sin shall be a man of Destruction; he travellet with Iniquity and conceives mischief, and brings forth falshood; but his wickedness shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing upon his own pate; he shall fall into the Ditch which he makes for others: I may speak here as the Prophet, Esai. 3. 15. What mean you that ye beat my People to pieces!* God will reckon with you for all the wrongs and injuries that his have sustained by means of you: He is much

much displeased to have his Vessels of honour counted as earthen Pitchers; to have his Jewels trodden upon and trampled under feet by the Swine of the World, *Psal. 9. 14.* Thou beholdest mischief and spite to requite it, the Poor committeth himself to thee, thou art the helper of the fatherless, *Zach.*

12. 2. and so on, *Behold I make Jerusalem a* *Psal. 14.* *Cup of trembling to all the People round about.*

Vers. 3. *I will make Jerusalem a burdensome Stone for all People: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces:* When God hath used the Rod a little longer to whip his People with it, and hath accomplished his work, his great work upon Mount Zion, then the Rod shall be consumed with the fire of his wrath: the glory of *Heathen Rome* is fallen, and the glory of *Antichristian Rome* will sooner or later fall and wither also.

4. Is the Lord the Believers God? then *The Be-* hath he portion enough; *The los*, he may *liever* well say, *is fallen to me in a pleasant place,* *hath por-* *I have a goodly heritage,* *Plal. 16. 5, 6.* Such a *tion e-* one, though he should be poor, yet he is *nough in* rich; though he should be naked, yet he is *God.* royally cloathed; though he should dye, yet he will live; though he hath nothing, yet he hath all: We read of *Esaú* that he said to *Jacob*, when he first refused his present, *I have enough;* in the *Hebrew*, 'tis *Rab*; that is, *Rab.* *much*, or *store*; he had much of that kind--- *Gen. 32. 9.* which *Jacob* offered; he had much of the worlds Goods; but *Jacob* urged him again,

*Take it I pray thee, because I have all; 'tis another word in the Original, **Jesh li Col;** I have all: and so a Believer hath enough, though he hath but little of the World; God can make that little, enough; he hath as much as is meet for him of outward things, as God seeth good; yea, having God, the poorest Believer is richer then all the world; for he hath all, in having him that is all in all: But I shall add no more by way of Information, how much may be spoken of this Subject if it were the design of this work: But I will hasten it over.*

Something also by way of Exhortation unto such who have the Lord for their God in a more peculiar way then such who are Christians only outwardly, but not inwardly: And the first thing I have to say unto such is this, *Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing; Col. i. 10.* that is, walk suitably and answerably to the relation that you stand in to him: you say, in outward matters a man should live suitably to that worldly condition which the Lord in his Providence hath disposed him to; and have we not higher reason for answerable walking to that spiritual condition which God by his special Acts of Providence hath brought a person too! your thoughts, your words and actions should be as is becoming and agreeable to such a state: Let me mind you of something in the fore-mentioned Scripture, being *faithful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God:*

God : These are things becoming a person who hath an Interest in God : and so 1 *Thess.* 2. 10. the Apostle having put them in remembrance of his holy, just, and unblameable behaviour among them, he exhorts them, *vers.* 12. *that they would walk worthy of God who hath called them to his Kingdom of Glory;* and speaking to the *Ephesians* of the same matter, he beseeches them to it : *Chap.* 4. 1. and he useth a pressing argument drawn from his present condition, and shews them afterwards what it is to walk worthy of such a high and honourable calling, with all lowliness and meekness, *Vers.* 2. and so on : *You must have your hearts in Heaven, where your Treasure is : your Conversation must be in Heaven : you must keep your selves unspotted from the World, and save your selves from this untoward Generation.* *Act.* 2. 4. God having done more for you then for others, you must do more for him then others : you should adorn the Doctrine of the Grace of God, and our Saviour in all things, *Tit.* 2. 10. it cannot be expressed what manner of persons you shoud be in all holy Conversations and Godlinesses : The Lord who saith, *I will be your God,* saith also, *Walk before me and be perfect;* and *you shall* *Gen.* 17. 1. *walk in my Statutes,* elsewhere : though others should cast them behinde their backs, you must set them before your faces : *I beseech you by the mercies of God, offer up your Bodies and Souls to him,* *Rom.* 12. 1. Let mercy allure, and prevail, and overcome your hearts yet more ; let the strong Cords of

Gods rich love draw and bind you fast to him : common kindness doth work much on some of common spirits ; and shall not the loving kindness of God melt, and constrain, and work powerfully upon renewed hearts : God hath therefore made you his peculiar people, that you may be zealous of good works, Tit. 2. 14. Good *Jeshua* spoke to the people of *Israel*, saying, *Chuse you this day whom you will serve* ; Josh. 24. 15, not as if he left it arbitrary to them to worship and serve God or no ; but he speaks this to bind them the more strongly to the Lord, and that they might freely and voluntarily declare what their purpose was in this matter, and to move them to serious and due consideration of their duty, and to put them upon a solemn renewal of their former promises : and so I say to you, *Chuse you this day whom ye will serve* ; nay, let me mind you of what hath already past between God and your Souls : you have already chosen the Lord, and said, *He shall be your God* : Well, yet however declare solemnly again what the purpose of your hearts in this matter is : how do you like the answer of the People to *Jeshua* in the 16. and 18. verses of the Chapter before, *We will serve the Lord for he is our God* ; I know that your hearts consent well and approve of it ; stand to it therefore, you have chosen well ; view your happiness in having the Lord for your God, and renew your choice, and diligently do the work which he doth call you to : now that I
may

may a little further indorse this upon you, ponder well these two following particulars:

First of all, God hath principled you for holy walking, my meaning is, he hath endowed you with his Spirit, which is a spirit of life and power; now *they that have the Spirit should walk after the Spirit*, Rom. 8. 1. Further, the Lord hath endowed you with the gracious active Principles of Faith and Love; we read in the Scripture of *the work of Faith*, and of *the labour of Love*; Love puts upon doing, and Faith fetches in the strength of Christ to enable the Soul for the good work which it sets about: Now consider, whether persons having such choice and excellent qualifications for service should not work and labour hard in the holy calling wherewith they are called: Hath God entrusted you with Talents, and shall not they be traded with? Have you working graces, and will you not stir up these gifts of God, and put forth Grace into act and exercise? Hath not God given you frames of heart suitable for the royal employment you are put upon? and shall not you faithfully acquit your selves therein? Men having reason, they must not live like Beasts; and Believers having another spirit, and more noble Principles than the most souly natural men, must not act like such: As they have taken Christ, so they must walk in him, *Col. 2. 6.* and look to it, that they do not receive any one grace of God in vain.

2. Consider this also, you are persons in a special way dedicated, devoted, and consecrated

Hiphlab
Pala.

separated to the Lord, *Psal. 4. 3. The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself*: The word in the *Hebrew* comes from *Pala*, he was wonderful, and signifies that God hath marvellously separated, chosen, and marked out, and set aside in a wondrous sort; and there is every way very much of the wonderful mystery of Grace in this thing, God hath put the godly man in a rank different from others, he hath set a badge of excellency upon him, pickt him out as an object of his tender care; and observe what is further spoken, *Jehovah hath separated such for himself*; they are not set apart for themselves, they are not to make Self the scope, and the end of their Actions: And 2ly, they are not set apart for the World to suit their ways and works to the corrupt humours of that; basely to comply with, and conform to that: They are separated from the World; though in it in respect of their bodily presence; yet they are out of it, and above it, in their hearts and affections. 3ly, They are not set apart for Satan, but turned from his power, and dominion, and listd into the service of a contrary Master, and to engage in a continual quarrel and controversie with him: Besides, there needs no such separation for living according to the course of the World, or for the service of Sin, and the Devil: an earthly carnal frame will serve the turn to do their drudgery; swarms of raging and raining lusts, increasing in ungodliness, the Devil looks upon as the best ornament for his house, and the

the best frame for his bondmen, and bond- Math. 12
women : The godly man is not *to live to the* 44.

lusts of men, but to the will of God, 1 Pet. 4. 2.

for he is set apart for him : We read in the
Scripture of things devoted to God : and they

were not to be alienated, neither must there
be an alienation of persons or services : Will

you give and take away again? will you give
your selves, and what you are and can do to

him, and take it away by withholding from
God the service which is due to his great

Name? would not this be to say, *that you*
have found iniquity in God, Jer. 2. 5. and that

'tis in vain to serve him, and that *he is a hard* Mal. 3. 14.

Master, and that *you have made a bad choice*
in taking the Lord for your God! Give not the

Adversary any occasion to speak after this
manner, let not such monstrous blasphemy

be ingraven upon your practices : take heed
that thorough thee there be not any evil re-

port brought up upon the holy and righte-
ous wayes of God : *You are not your own, but*

the Lords ; glorifie him therefore in your bodies
and souls, 1 Cor. 6. 20. Thou hast robbed God

of much of his due already, do not rob him
of any more ; say, as the Apostle, *Whether I*

live, I live to the Lord, or whether I dye, I dye to
the Lord, Rom. 14. 8. We have not such a

good Religion only to talk of, but to live
over ; Satan hath incroached much already ;

Look to him that he may not incroach upon
Gods right in thy service any more : *Worship*

me said the Devil unto Christ ; *No,* saith
Christ ; as it were, the Law saith in general,

Thou

Then must worship the Lord, and I apply that to my self in particular, I will not give thee any, Match. 4. 10. when the Devil tempts thee to sin, say, I am not set apart for thee, I owe thee no service; but I am a debtor to God, I am set apart and devoted to him: Shall a man rob God? Psal. 119. 94. I am shine, saith the Psalmist, in the Hebrew 'tis
Lecha Ani. I to thee, I belong to thee, I have given my self to thee, I dedicate my self to thy service; so let us say, I to thee, Lord; tell Satan thou art to the Lord; and tell the World so too, when it interposeth, and woeth for your hearts and affections: Why should I love the world and the things of it? Why should I pursue vanity and follow after leasing? Why should I go a whoring after that which cannot profit? I am not to the World. 'Tis not for Princes to imbrace Dunghils; 'tis not for the Lords Jewels to lie among filthy rubbish; the World is made to be the place of my habitation, but not to be the object of my affections: Christian, let none hinder thee in running thy race, nor so much as weaken thy hands in the good work thou hast begun: Enoch walked with God it seems some hundred of years, Gen. 5. If we were to live here never so long, yet 'tis fit God should have all our time, and all our strength: what we acknowledge in the Principle, let us manifest by our Practice: I shall be shorter in the other Particulars, having been longer then I intended in this.

Gen. 5. 12.

2. *Is the Lord thy God?* then fear and tremble before him, *Deut. 28. 58.* This appertaineth to him from thee as a Creature, *Jer. 10. 7.* and this new Relation which thou art under, is so far from weakning the Obligation, that it doth confirm and strengthen it, the tie is the stronger; but of this I may speak more largely in another place.

3. *Is the Lord your God?* then confess and acknowledge this, as there shall be occasion ministred in the way of Gods Providence: Let the World know whose thou art, and whom thou livest upon, and from whom thou expectest good, and that thou *desirest none in Heaven or in Earth in comparison of him:* Some there be that would lay this as a reproach upon a person that such a one is the Lords, and laugh him out, if they could, from a claim of a special Interest in this great God: But oh never be ashamed of this Relation; Shall a man be ashamed of of that which is his honor and glory? *Psal. 3. 3. But thou, O Lord, art a Shield for me, my glory.* Herein the greatness and exaltation of a person lies that the Lord is his God: *There is no Rock like our God, 1 Sam. 2. 2. and see Deut. 32. 31. The Rock of others is not as our Rock, the Enemies themselves being judges:* Ask them when they are in the most sober moods, and make some kind of mournful reflections upon the evil of their wayes, where their portion be like the Believers portion, where their choice in choosing their own wayes and abominations be as good as the Believers choice

choice in choosing the Lord for his God, and his Word for the rule of his life? Will they not sometimes under the good moods of Conscience say, the Believer is the happy man, and oh that I may dye his death! Even *Pharaoh* at length acknowledged the God of *Moses* and *Aaron* to be above him; and *Nebuchadnezzar* could say, *Dan. 3. That the Lord was the most High, and that none could deliver in such a manner as he.* Who is ashamed of his Relation to a great earthly Monarch? But this glory is shame and baseness in comparison of the honour of the Saints in having the Lord for their God: Never hang down thy head nor blush for this: but *rejoyce in that thou art exalted*, *Jam. 1. 9.* See how the Church boasteth in this dignity and privilege, *Psal. 48. ult. This God is our God for ever; we have strength enough engaged for our help; we know where to have counsel and direction enough, This God is our God, and he will be our guide:* If any say, Where is thy God? say, Our God is in Heaven: If any ask, Whose servant art thou? say as *Jonah* to the Mariners, *Jonas 1. 9. I fear the God of Heaven:* I belong to him, I have given up my self to him: he is my Lord and Master: *'Psal. 116. 16. Truly, O Lord, thy servant, I thy servant.* Oh confess the Lord before men: as you believe in the heart, so witness as there is occasion, a good confession with the mouth, *Rom. 10 10.* The Lord is not ashamed to be called your God, and he makes it known that he is not; *Heb. 11. 16.* he tells the world that

that he *hath prepared for them a City*, these shall reign with me for ever : God calls himself *the God of Eliab*, 2 *King*. 2. 14. and *David's God*, and frequently in the Scripture the Lord calls his People, *My People*, and *Mal*. 3. 17. *In the day when I make up my Jewels* : God may justly be ashamed of us, *What manner of love is this, that we should be called the Children of God !* *Joh*. 1. 3. but we have not the least reason to be ashamed of him : in a holy manner we should make our *boast of him*, *Psal*. 34. 2. and see *Psal*. 44. 8. *In God we boast all the day long* : Say, *This God is my God* : Let others have the honours, and pleasures, and profits of the World ; I will not exchange my Portion for the largest confluence of outward things ; *This God is my God*.

4. Is the Lord your God ? oh then cleave to him, continue and abide with him, *Josh*. 23. 8. and so *Joh*. 15. 4. *Abide in me, and I in you* : Renew your Covenant by frequent acts of Faith, lay hold upon him, settle upon him, never turn away from following the Lord : God will not turn from his People ; *Whom he once loves, he loves for ever*, *Joh*. 13. 1. he loves them to the end, and abides with them to the end, *Psal*. 18. ult. *He will be our guide to death* : See what the Lord saith, *Psal*. 132. 13, 14. *The Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his Habitation, this is my rest for ever, here will I dwell* ; mark, he doth not come to sojourn among his People for a while only, but he comes to dwell ; he is not to them like a travelling man, that

that takes up one or two nights rest with us; and then he is gone, and we see again his face no more; but here saith God, *I will rest for ever*; and the Lord likes his dwelling; he hath chosen this for his Mansion house, the Lord of Glory hath desired it; *Zeph. 3.*

17. The Lord thy God will rejoyce over thee with joy, he will rest in his love: and why should not we rest in him? Can we find a better dwelling place? Can we mend our choice? Can we go any whether to find a better Master to serve? 'tis not possible. *Job. 6.* most of Christs followers left him, and said *Christ to the twelve, Will you also go away?* then Peter answered, *Lord to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life:* as if he had said, We do acquiesce and rest in thee, far be all the thoughts of a departure; we should change for the worse if we should leave thee; though never so many draw back, we find by experience that 'tis best for us to remain still with thee: *Have any Nation changed their Gods? Jer. 2. 11. and so Mic. 4. 11. Every People will walk in the Name of his God;* Let us walk in the Name of the Lord our God for ever and ever: You must abhor evil and cleave to good, be unmoveably joyned and glued to that which is good; you must stick to the Testimonies of God which you have chosen: Follow the Lamb whether soever he goeth, follow him fully, and follow him constantly; *Hold fast the Profession of your Hope, without so much as wavering, Heb. 10. 23. For he is faithful, that hath promised a Crown of Life to them*

Psal. 90.

them who patiently continue with him in well doing : Art not thou built upon a Rock ? and is not this sure footing, and very firm standing ? Be not moved then and driven off from Col. 1. 23 thy confidence by the most blustering storms²³ and tempests of affliction whatsoever.

5. Do you trust in God ? hope and encourage your selves in him. God counts himself honoured when he is trusted, *Rom. 4. 1. Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God ; and he counts himself dishonoured when he is not believed ; this is to charge him with weakness and insufficiency, or else with want of love and care, or with lying and unfaithfulness, 1 Job. 5. 10. but God cannot lye ; and as a Father pities his Children, so the Lord pities them that fear him ; even when he speaks hard words against them, his bowels are troubled for them, and he earnestly remembers them still, Jer. 31. 20. And he will surely have mercy upon them ; Gods eye is upon the righteous still ; to this man will God look, Isai. 66. 2. upon every particular Believer : He will look so much upon, and so much after this and that particular Believer ; as if there were no other person in the world ; 'tis one of the glorious Titles of God, Jer. 14. 8. The Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble : Trust then in the Lord Jehovah, yea trust in him for ever, for in the Lord is everlasting strength : God is engaged in point of Honour to help and defend his People, and that being so dear to him, assure thy self his care will not be wanting :*

*He will keep thee in six troubles, yea also in seven, in all your troubles: Cast thy care upon the Lord, unburden thy Soul, and rouse all thy concerns upon the Lord, because he hath said, He will care for you, 1 Pet. 5. 7. We read of the People of Judah, that they rested upon the words of Hezekiah: How quietly and comfortably should we rest ourselves upon the words of God; we need not have any disquieting and distracting thoughts, Phil. 4. 6. but by prayer and supplication make our requests known unto God: and by faith patiently expect that he will work all our works in us and for us, and wisely order and manage every affair for His glory and our good; let us mind our Generation-work to fulfil all the wills of God; as the expression, with respect to David: *Act. 13. 22. πάντα τὰ θελήματά μου, who shall fulfil all my wills:* and let us let Zions God alone, who ruleth in all the Kingdoms of the Earth with the governing work of the World: there be true Promises, and these be grounds of trust: Gods Word hath been tried, and proved for many generations; it hath been found true, that he is a *Buckler to all those that trust in him, Psal. 18. 30.* Many in our age can bring in their Experiences, and say, *It is good to trust in the Lord at all times,* Have not you proved it in your own case? Cannot you set your selves unto this? prove the Lord yet further; for *his mercy endureth for ever, and his faithfulness to all Generations, Psal. 119. 90.* O then say, At what time I am afraid, I will trust in God: see *Isai.**

12. 2. Behold, God is my Salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; the Lord Jehovah is my Strength and Song, he is become my Salvation.

Lastly, By Prayer improve thy Interest in God: improve It for thy self; his Heart of Love being set upon thee, his gracious Ear is open to thy Prayer; he hath said, *He will do thee good, but he will be enquired unto by his People*; Earthly fathers intend to give to their children what they need; but they love to hear their childrens voyce, to have their little ones, whom their bowels yern over, to come and say, in a dutiful submissive manner, Pray Father give this or that to supply my want: and God loves his Childrens voyce; *The Prayer of the Upright is his delight*, Prov. 15. 8. *'tis as sweet Incense before him*, Psa. 141. 2. *I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself*, saith God, *his cry pierced my Ear, and reached my Heart*; let God hear thy voyce, and see thee tugging and wrestling for a Blessing; go pour thy request into his Bosome; say, Lord my God, bear me up in the Arms of thy Love; carry me as on Eagles wings; let me be endued with power from on high; let me be able with comfort to look the heaviest cross, yea death it self in the face with comfort: make hard and bitter things sweet to me: let me be carryed aloft in my spirit above discouragements, against hope let me believe in hope; *Rebuke me not in thy hot displeasure*, stay thy rough wind in the day of the East wind: if it be possible, let this or that Cup of Affliction which seems

to be reached out to me, pass from me; however not my will, yet let thy will be done: however keep my Spirit from fainting; magnifie thy power in my weakness, let thy grace be sufficient for me: *Neh. 5. 19. Think upon me, my God, for good*; he makes a particular address for his own Soul. *My God*, is a great word, and may give boldness when 'tis the language of Faith: and *Psal. 3. 5. Arise and save me. O my God*, and *Psal. 5. 1. so do thou, say, My God*, help thy servant who desireth to fear thy Name; let me glorifie thee in the doing and suffering work I am called to; while I am in the world, keep me from the evil of the world, and the like.

Zeph. 3.
18.

2. To conclude this Point, be sure to improve thy Interest in God for the good of the Church of God; let *Zions* friends be grieved for *Zions* distresses; the reproaches of the solemn Assemblies should sit as a heavy burden upon thy soul. You that fear the Lord, *give him no rest till he establish Jerusalem, and make her a praise in the Earth: Plead for her, plead, cry night and day, Isai. 62. 6, 7.* Intreat the God to whom Salvation belongeth, to be jealous for her with a great jealousy; to compass her about with mercy, to cause her light to break forth, and the glory of the Lord to rise upon her: *Psal. 122. 6. Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem*; by the strength of God, wrestle so by Prayer and Supplication with God, that thou mayst be *Israel*, a Prevailer with God: hold him fast by Faith, and do not let him go without

out a Blessing upon her: Say, as the Psalmist, *Psal. 28. 9. Save thy People, and bless thy Heritage, feed them, and lift them up for ever;* and so *A/sa* improves his Interest in God for the Church too, *2 Chron. 14. 11. and Hezekiah, and Nehemiah, Hear us, O our God, for we are despised, Neh. 4. 4.* A mean private Believer may be publickly useful and serviceable this way: Do what thou canst, ply the Throne of Grace by fervent Prayer, plead Gods Promises, and let Faith expect down the Blessing; I shall add no more to this first Doctrine.

I come now to that for which I pitch upon this Subject: and that is this; *That the Lord is a consuming Fire, very Terrible and Dreadful in his Justice unto the Wicked:* or else in fewer words thus; *The Lord is Terrible to the Wicked, even a consuming Fire.*

The place in the 4th of *Deuteronomie*, whence this is taken, follows upon something spoken of Idolatry; Take heed of turning from the Lord, and turning after a graven Image: But what need is there of such a caution, and of such care on our part in this matter? It may be answered, Much every way, and particularly because of the danger you run your selves upon in such a course; you cast your selves hereby, as it were, into the fire: to your peril be it, if you allow and take liberty to your selves in this thing; for the God whom you have by an open Profession of service and subjection avouched to be your God, *Is a consuming fire:*

But it may be they were ready to think, This is a small matter, and the great God will take but little notice, and make but little account of it; but this is a very gross mistake; *for he is a jealous God*: he cannot endure a Rival, or Competitor; he will not give his Glory to any other: He is a jealous God, and the great jealousy of God is about the matters of his Worship; 'tis worth our observing, that this expression should not be found in any other of the Commandments but in the second, where the Lord doth give order and take care about his Worship: We read of jealousy in man, it is the rage of a man, and *Chap. 27. 4. Who can stand before envy?* in the Original it is *Kinab*, from the root *Kana*, *He was jealous*; and so we may read as in the margin, *Who can stand before his jealousy?* it is the heat of that raging Passion, many will not spare; and jealousy in God intimates high displeasure against such as go a whoring from him, and provoke him to jealousy; but God is not a consuming fire to Idolaters only, but to all other ungodly ones: the Apostle here urgeth to the service of God with fear upon this account, because *God is a consuming fire.*

That which is generally intended by these expressions, That Gods Anger and Wrath against the wicked is exceeding hot; 'tis a burning, fierie, flaming wrath: The Holy God is a consuming fire upon this account: I say, in that his displeasure is exceeding great against his Enemies;

Enemies ; there is very much terribleness in
 it ; it will accomplish and effect their ruine
 and destruction, and bring such woe and
 sorrow upon them, as will be very amazing
 and astonishing, as well as exceeding af-
 flictive and tormenting in the day in which
 he comes to plead his sore controversie
 with them in a way of execution of what
 he hath threatned so plainly and expressly in
 his Word : You know fire is very sharp and
 piercing; things are very passive in it: some are
 set out in the Scripture as Monuments of very
 dreadful vengeance & misery; whom the King
 of *Babylon* roasted in the fire, of them ^{Jer. 19. 11,} it is
 said shall be taken up a curse; when any im-
 precated sore vengeance from the Lord upon
 any one, it is said, *The Lord make thee like Abah,*
and Zedekiah, whom the King roasted in the
fire. To have the least member in the fire is
 terrible; but to have the body roasting in the
 fire for evil doing, how afflicting and af-
 flicting is that? To set out a little further
 the dreadfulnes of fire, see *Exod. 12. 9.*
 where is a charge given about the Paschal
 Lamb, that it should not be eaten raw, nor
 sodden at all with water, but be roasted
 with fire; that Lamb, we know, was Typi-
 cal of Christ, who is called, *the Holy Lamb* ^{Joh. 1. 29.}
of God; and the roasting with fire, seems to
 point out the unspeakable sharpness and ex-
 tremity of Christs sufferings: the pains were
 very great which the Lord endured in his
 Body; but in his Soul he had a very deep
 sense and experience of the exceeding hor-

ness of Gods fiery displeasure against sin; and when the scorching heat of Gods fierce wrath did beat against his Soul, and he was, as it were, roasting before the burning fire thereof, it had a great influence upon the Body, so that his tongue did as it were cleave to his jaws, *Psal.* 22. 15. and his throat was even dried with thirst; and if the fire of divine fury did burn so hot upon the only begotten Son of God when he stood in the sinners room and stead, to bear the Lords wrath, so that he was even roasted with it; you may be sure it will break out very terribly upon such as go on still in their sins: it will burn, and burn upon them, and not spare.

Sublunary fire, unless it be restrained by a miracle, you know, cannot but work upon the matter that is combustible, when it is cast into it: this is suitable to its nature; and God though he be a free Agent, having resolved and declared that he will destroy his Adversaries, is bound in point of faithfulness to make good his Word herein; and so cannot but destroy in his fierce wrath, those who do not turn from their sins: he may not, he will not let them go unpunished.

Before I proceed in the further opening of this Doctrine, let me tell you; the use of fire hath been sometime to denote the Presence of God in a way of love and favour to his People, *Exod.* 3. 2. where we read, how the Angel of the Lord appeared un-

to Moses in a flame of Fire out of the midst of a Bush; and he looked, and behold the Bush burned with Fire, and the Bush was not consumed: Here was a representation of the Churches affliction; it was then in Egypt, a house of Bondage, in the midst of a fiery furnace, *Deut. 4. 20.* But now the Lord was in the Bush while it was in the Fire: we read *Deut. 33. 16.* of the good Will of Him that dwelled in the Bush: God was there in a way of merciful Protection and Preservation; they were in the Fire, but he was with them in the Fire: and elsewhere we read of David's offering Sacrifice, and of Gods answering by Fire, *1 Chron. 21. 26.* which notes his acceptance of the Offering; and so *Levit. 9. 23, 24.* But now here in the Text *2 Chron. 7. 1, 3.* God is said to be a consuming fire: The Lord hath not alwayes consumed when he hath appeared in Fire; as in the Bush before, and so in his going before his People in the Wilderness afterwards in the Pillar of Fire by night, *Deut. 1. 33.*

A great Design in this Discourse, is to use some endeavour to bring Sinners to right apprehensions concerning the great and most glorious Lord God, and awaken them out of the deep and dead sleep of carnal security, under which I plainly perceive great multitudes do generally lie; and this is one thing which I observe in the course of my present Ministry; That the spreading rooted Atheism in the heart, and the carnal, false, and unscriptural Representations

presentations which men have of the Holy and Righteous God in their minds, is that which doth very much obstruct the powerful working of the Gospel, and the desired success of my own and others labours upon the hearts and lives of the People. Many cry out of Ministers, you see they labour in the fire, they toil all the night in spreading the Net and catch nothing; they work in the fire, God is departed from them; the Lord doth blow upon and blast their labours; who is it after all their preaching is turned from sin unto God? But alas how little is it considered that the fault is very much in the People! they are led by false Principles: they take up with such wrong notions about God, and the holy path of Faith and Gospel-Obedience, as are very destructive to the life and power of the pure Religion: prejudice and inadvertency, or some cross apprehension which the mind hath before received, or the like, ordinarily cause what we speak to the ear, to pass away as an empty sound in the air, before it come to the considering view of the Understanding to pass a judgment upon it; and thus we sow, as it were, upon the stones, and plough, as it were, upon the Rock; and the Devil is but at little labour to make what hath cost us some pain and travel of soul, altogether unfruitful; and therefore I hope it may be of good use to present something to the eye which is not so transient, with respect to very many, as that which is exposed to the ear: I'll assure thee I am not without expectation
of

of some blessing which the great Shephard and Bishop of Souls may make me Instrumental of this way, and so remove in part at least the reproach which many cast upon the Ministerie. I aim at an awakening Discourse; (the Lord of his mercy assist and enable for it) upon this quick and awakening Subject. Sinners must see their danger, and have some feeling of it before they are like with seriousness of endeavour to look after a Saviour.

The method which I am willing to observe in the Prosecution of this Point, is

First of all, To lay down some Propositions for the further clearing of it: And then

2ly, To shew that each Person in the blessed Trinity is consuming fire.

3. To give particular Instances of several sorts of persons to whom the Lord is consuming fire.

4. To discover why the Lord will be so terrible in his dealing with the wicked: and then propound something by way of Objection, add so pass to the Application.

For the first of these; to lay down a few Propositions for the Illustrating of this Point.

And the first shall be this; *When man at first sinned, there were quick discoveries of the terribleness of Gods anger and displeasure against him for sin*: Nay, I might have said he was no sooner almost created, but God did threaten to proceed in a terrible manner against him in case of sin: *Gen. 2. 17. But of the Tree of Knowledge of Good Evil thou shalt not eat; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou*

thou shalt surely die: 'Tis a great threatening; in those few words be contained many curses; the death threatened is temporal, of the Body in separation from the Soul; and of outward Plagues in this life, as fore-runners of the other; and spiritual death of the Soul in sin, and eternal death of the Soul and Body in Hell: Oh the fearful wrath which sin hath kindled! it hath caused the Creator to be angry with the work of his own hands: Man transgressing Gods command, must die, and without mercy perish, and come under the power of the second death: But I say, when *Adam* had eaten of the forbidden fruit, he quickly tasted of the bitter fruit of sin; when he heard the voice of God in the Garden afterwards, it sounded very terribly to him, *Gen. 3. 10. I heard thy voice in the Garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid my self*: The voice of God before his fall was refreshing and comfortable to him, for it was the voice of a friend; but now after his fall it was very terrifying; for man having set himself against God, it was now the voice of an Enemy: and there is much of Gods wrath demonstrated in what God said particularly to the

Gen. 3. 16, 17, 18, 19. man and woman: and see vers. 24. So he drove out the man: God forced him away, though he were never so willing to stay: *Jegavesth*. though he were never so willing to stay: *Jegavesth* 'tis in the *Hebrew*, and it imports here that it was in displeasure, and with some force and compulsion, much against *Adam's* mind; 'tis the same word which is rendred

Exod.

Exod. 12. 39. thrust out; the Egyptians thrust out the Israelites from Egypt; and God did thrust Adam out of Paradise: and it follows, God placed at the East of the Garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming Sword, to keep every way the Tree of life: This was a terrible dispensation, and it plainly intimated the flaming fiery displeasure that was in God against man for sin.

The second Proposition is this; *When the Lord came to give his Law to man, he came in a very terrible manner: see Exod. 19. 17, 18. when Moses brought the People to meet with God, 'tis said, That Mount Sinai was altogether in a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a Furnace, and the whole Mountain quaked greatly; what a terrible appearance was this! and so elsewhere the Mount burned with Fire; he speak out of the fire, and talked with you out of the midst of the fire, Deut. 4. 12. 33. and so in the 36. verse too, Out of Heaven he made thee to hear his voice, and upon the Earth he shewed thee his great fire, and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire: Man having broken the Law, deserved to be burned, and destroyed with the fire of Gods wrath; and although the Lord in mercy came to reveal and make known his righteous Statutes and Judgments; yet he would have man, to consider what he was worthy of for sin, and to take heed to himself to walk in this Law with all his heart, lest this great devouring fire should destroy him.*
Now

Now If the giving of the Law was so terrible, How unpeakably terrible will the execution of it with all the fiery curses and threatnings thereof be upon all those who cast this Law behind their backs, hating to be reformed ! if it were given in fire, the contempt of it is like to be punished with fire : This fiery Law, as it is called in *Deut.* will bring down fiery indignation : But of this in another place.

3. Proposition, *The anger and displeasure of God revealed against men in outward judgments for sin, because of the terrible and*
Ezek. 22. soreness of it, is frequently in the Scripture
20, 21, 22. compared to and set out by fire. It were very easie to multiply Instances to this purpose ; see *Lament. 2. 3.* He hath cut off in his fierce anger all the Horn of Israel ; he hath drawn back his right hand before the Enemy, and he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire, which devoureth round about : They had made him very angry by mocking his Messengers, and by despising his words, and by abusing his Prophets ; he was highly incensed and provoked by them ; *Jerusalem* had so grievously sinned, that Gods wrath arose and burned down their Gates, their City, and their Temple, and greatly watted and consumed Princes and Priests, and the men of *Judah* : and see the next verse of the same Chapter, *He bent his Bow like an Enemy, and poured out his fury like Fire* : they had warning of this before, and the threatening went out under the Metaphor of Fire, and was terrible as well as the

the execution, *Jer. 4. 4. Circumcise your selves to the Lord, and take away the foreskin of your hearts, lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it :* and we have neer the same words in another place, *Jer. 21. 12.* and besides the many threatnings, they had examples of the soreness of Gods displeasure in the judgements inflicted upon others ; many of their neighbours houses had been on fire and consumed ; yea, God had kindled letter burnings among themselves in lighter judgements then those which came upon them afterwards, but they obeyed not the voyce, received not correction, stood not in the gap to turn away the fierce anger of the Lord from them. *Isa. 42. ult. He poured upon Jacob the fury of his anger, and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not ; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart ;* though they were under smarting calamities, though they lay frying and scorching in the fire of Gods wrath, yet they were extreemly stupid and insensible, that they were not affected with it : they would burn, rather then turn from their sins, and thereby live ; and that is the sad part of the present case of persons and people ordinarily.

4. *Not only Fire Metaphorically, but even real Fire from an angry and provoked God hath broken out upon some persons, and destroyed them from the Land of the living : That is a very sad instance which we find in the 19. of Gen. of the people of Sodome, and some neighbour Cities, who are set forth as an example of*
the

Cabdah.

the terrible vengeance of the holy God: 'tis said they were sinners exceedingly before God, Gen. 13. 13. and Gen. 18. 20. Their cry was great, and their sin was very grievous; Cabdah 'tis in the Hebrew, it was heavy and weighty; they were loaded with it, and it even pressed God; it was a burthen to him, so that at length he was grown weary of repenting, and could bear no longer, but eased himself of that wicked race by raining down fire from Heaven upon them, Luk. 17. 29. The same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all: And that is a very doleful instance also in the case of some who rebelled against Moses and Aaron, and would needs level every thing in Church and State, have Magistracy and Ministry lie common; we read of it, Numb. 16. 35. There came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered Incense: The sin was great, and the punishment was signal; and care was taken that there might be a standing monument thereof, to give warning to the surviving of that age, and to persons of future Generations, that they commit not the like sin in invading the Priests Office, lest they did likewise perish; that is the meaning of the charge in the following verses, *That they should take the censers of these sinners against their own souls, and make them broad plates for the covering of the Altar; and the Lord himself declares for what end this was given in charge*

Numb. 16.
37. 38.

charge to be done, as it follows there, *and they shall be a sign to the Children of Israel.* And consider that one Scripture more, 2 King. 1. 10. when some came to fetch the Prophet to *Abaziah*, *Elijah* said to the *Captain of Fifty*; *If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from Heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty, and there came down fire from Heaven and consumed him and his fifty*; and so it was with another Captain and his fifty, ver. 12. What a God is this God? the Lord of all the Earth, that he contendeth thus by fire: this second Captain said, *Come down quickly*; but the Lord was quick with him; a fire not blown, made a speedy riddance of him.

5. *This mighty and terrible God hath prepared fire to burn such as die away in their sins, unconverted, and unrenewed; he hath fiery outward judgements, which he can inflict upon his Enemies in this life, and he can burn their souls here with the fire of his wrath: Judas* felt much of this after he had betrayed his Master, which so pained and tormented his spirit, and so scorched his Conscience, that he sought a cure and ease by death, though he was mistaken in that, and so went from a lesser fire into a greater: the fire of Hell which hath been burning upon him for more then 15 hundred years already, and will burn upon him for ever. God can quickly, if he please, send the fire of his wrath upon the soul of a sinner, cheering his heart in the way of sin, and so drink up his spirit,

and dry up all his refreshing from earthly delights : This is a very terrible burning, O sinner ! If God let out a drop of his wrath upon thy Conscience, he can make it feel hotter, and more tormenting, then if a load of melted Lead should be poured out upon thee. But however the ungodly should escape in this life, they shall not escape the fire of Hell : How much is there of this in the New Testament ! out of Christs own mouth, how many flashes of fire, as it were, came forth in threatnings against the wicked ? *Matth. 13. 42.* and so *ver. 50.* *He shall sever the wicked from the just, and cast them into a furnace of fire ; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth :* That was a very hot Furnace that *Nebuchadnezzar* caused to be heated, into which the three Children were cast, in the third of *Daniel* : But this is another manner of furnace, and the heat other manner of heat : that furnace was burning but for a while ; but this hath been heating and burning for a great many ages together : and that furnace was heated by men ; but this is heated by an Almighty and All-powerful and displeased God ; and that was heated by such brittle matter as wood, or straw, or some such like ; but this is heated by the breath of that God who is consuming fire : and so *Matth. 18. 8.* we read also of this fire of Hell : and in some places we read of fire and brimstone, *Rev. 21. 8.* *But the Fearful, and Unbelieving, and Lyars, and others shall be cast into a Lake burning with Fire*

Fire and Brimstone, which is the second death: Go ye cursed, will God in his sentence upon the wicked say, into Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels, Matth. 25. 41. not a word there but is full of horror: many have no trembling and shaking upon their souls now, though they hear often of it from the mouth of Ministers; but they will seem to be other manner of words, when the mouth of God himself shall utter them; he will speak them with such Sovereign Power and Royal Majesty and Authority, and with such manifest discoveries of fiery indignation, and such firmness of resolution to see his sentence duly executed, that the sinners heart will shake worse then an Aspen leaf; astonishment and confusion will cover his face; then they shall quiver and quake when they shall hear it from the mouth of him that will sit upon the Throne, and cry out, woe and alas, I have tasted of the sweet morsels of forbidden pleasure, and now I must perish: Fire must be the dreadful instrument of my pain and torment; and Devils and fellow-sinners must be my companions; I must bear the punishment of my lewdness, and vanity, and folly; woe and alas I have destroyed my self.

6. There be many Representations of God in the Scripture, which are very suitable to, and well agreeing with, what is spoken of him in my Text, That he is consuming fire: see Psal. 18. 10, 11, 12, 13. He rode upon a Cherub, and did fly; his Pavilion round about

him were thick clouds of the skies; before him passed Hail and Coals of fire: and afterwards the Highest gave his voice Hail and Coals of fire; and so Psal. 97. 3, 4, 5, and so on: A fire goeth before him and burneth up his Enemies round about: his lightnings enlightened the world; the earth saw and trembled: The Hills melted like Wax at the presence of the Lord: What dreadful representations are these! of what terrible Majesty is this great and glorious Lord God! There is much to the like purpose in Ezek. 1. 1. I saw Visions of God; I looked and behold, a great cloud and fire infolding it self, and as the colour of Amber out of the midst of the fire, vers. 26. above the Firmament, the likeness of a Throne, and as the appearance of a Man above it; and I saw as the colour of Amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it: and from the appearance of the Loyns upwards and downward I saw as the appearance of fire. But before I pass this over, let me instance in some particulars to give yet a fuller account of the terrible representation of the Majesty of God, as we have an account of it in the Scripture; from the appearance of his Loins downward and upwards, as the appearance of Fire; He is all over as it were fire: But more particularly, the Scripture speaking of God, who yet is a Spirit, so as we may the better understand it, I shall labour to set before you what I there find.

God hath
a tongue
of fire,

First of all, His Tongue is as it were fire; we have such expressions, *Isai.* 30. 27. no wonder the Law, as was before-mentioned,

oned, is called a *fiery Law*, since it came from such a Law-giver whose *tongue* is said to be a *devouring and consuming fire*; and so in another place, *Fire out of his mouth devoured*, 2 Sam. 22. 9. His words are as it were fire, he speaks as it were fire. Now you know fire burns down before it; and so the Word of God shall make through work, it shall burn down what is before it: it shall not return void till what it speaks be accomplished: They that do not receive it into their hearts, and walk in the light of it, shall be consumed by it: *The voice of God are Coals of Fire*, Psal. 18. 13.

2. He hath Lips of fire too, *Esai. 30. 27.* God hath *Behold, the Name of the Lord cometh from* lips of fire. *far, and the burden of his anger is heavy; in the margin, 'tis the grievousness of the flame is heaviness:* The flame of our fire is light and ascends upward; but the flame of this fire is heaviness, as 'tis in the *Hebrew*, and it will burn down even to the lowest Hell: It follows, *his Lips are full of indignation;* the word in the Original is *Zagnam*, and it imports a very high degree of Anger; God is so angry with the wicked as to detest and abhor them greatly, and his lips are full of his burning wrath against them: his Heart is so heated and fired with displeasure against them, that it breaketh out as it were in his lips.

3. The great God hath a fiery breath too; God hath *see Isai. 30. 33, Tophet is ordained of old, it is deep and large, the pile thereof is Fire, and* a fiery breath.

*much wood : the Breath of the Lord like a stream of Brimstone doth kindle it. Sinner, Didst thou ever think, that the Scripture did speak so terribly, as thou hearest now it doth, concerning that God whom thou hast despised and made so light of ? We read of the Leviathan that great wonder in the Sea, Job 41. 21. That his breath kindleth Coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth ; and by reason of its greatness and terrible-ness, How are they that go down in great Ships, afraid to stir him up ? as in the tenth verse of that chapter ; and consider hereupon the question, which the Lord propounds in the latter part of that verse, Who then is able to stand before me ? If you are afraid to stand before a fiery breathing creature, How much less are you able to stand before a fiery-breathing Creator ? see *Isai.* 30. 28. *His Breath is an overflowing stream : the Breath of this God is killing and destroying ; Isai.* 11. 4. *He shall smite the Earth with the Rod of his Mouth, and with the Breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.**

God hath
fiery no-
strils.

4. God hath fiery Nostrils too. *2 Sam.* 22. 9. *There went up a smোক out of his Nostrils :* Where is smোক, we use to say, is fire ; and in the next words we read of fire here too : 'tis by the Nostrils that there is breathing ; and where is a fiery breath, there must needs be Nostrils of fire : We read of a Creature in the Book of *Jch*, the glory of whose Nostrils is terrible : and if it may be said so of a Creature, How terrible

is the glory of the Nostrils of a fiery breathing God ?

6. God hath eyes of fire also. *Dan. 10. 6.* God hath *His Eyes are as Lamps of Fire: and Revel. eyes of*
1. 14. His Eyes are as a Flame of Fire; there ^{hrc.}
 is much wrath in his looks upon the sinner; if there be a fiery Tongue, and fiery Breath in him, there must needs be flames and sparks of fire as it were in his eye: The wicked ordinarily perswade themselves, though without good warrant, that God looks with an eye of love and favour upon them; that he is their Friend and Husband in and through Christ reconciled to them; But what a more, nay, what a beam have such persons in their eye? they are very much dazzled, and hood-winkt; The god of this world and a deceived heart hath blinded them: Oh that the eyes of such were open, that they may see the wrath and the vengeance that is in Gods eye towards all the impenitent and unbelieving! Would you see clearly in this matter? then go to the Scripture: there as in a glass you may see the face of God, it is set against them that do evil; *Psal. 34. 16.* and how, *His Eye of Love* is said to be *upon the Righteous*; and how his Eye is full of fiery wrath with respect to the wicked; and how quickly may this Angry God look the Sinner into destruction?

7. God hath fiery feet too; see *Hab. 3. 5.* God hath *Before his Face went the Pestilence, and there* fiery feet,
Went out, 'tis said, *Resheph, a fiery burning*
Coal, or a spark of Fire at his Feet: and so

Revel. 10. 1. where 'tis said of the mighty Angel, which I understand of Christ, *That his Face was as it were the Sun, and his Feet as Pillars of Fire; and so Rev. 1. 15. The Feet of the Son of Man are like unto fine Brass, as if they burned in a Furnace:* See how terrible the great God is every way: he treads, as it were, upon the fire; and if thou do not come to be at peace with him, he will tread thee down into the fire of Hell.

God hath
a fiery
Throne.

8. Let this be considered, The Lord hath a fiery Throne also; he sits, as it were, upon fire, *Dan. 7. 9. I beheld till the Ancient of Days did sit: his Throne was like the burning fiery flame, and his Wheels as burning Fire:* and in the 10. verse, 'tis said, *a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him:* and see *Psal. 50. 1, 3. The Lord hath spoken and called the Earth, from the rising of the Sun to the going down of the same: Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him:* By the way, Sinner, think what a Judge art thou to appear before? one who speaks and breaths fire, and whose Eyes sparkle out fire, and whose Throne is fire; What is like to become of such a one as thou art then? What canst thou look for or expect then? but that the fiery wrath of this great God should take hold of thee, who didst bid him to depart from thee, saying, in thy heart at least, thou didst not desire the knowledge of his wayes: But something of this may fall in elsewhere.

9. The Angels which wait about Gods Throne, and are ready to do his will in the execution of judgements upon the wicked, whensoever the Lord shall imploy them, and who shall be made use of hereafter by God to gather together, and sever the Tares, and the bad Fish to be burned; *Matth. 13. 30. & 49.* These Angels are a flame of fire, *Heb. 1. 7.* When *Elisha's* servant had his eyes opened, he saw the Guard of Angels which the Lord had sent about the Prophet; and see what is mentioned of it, *2 King. 6. 17. Behold the Mountain full of Horses and Chariots of fire round about Elisha*: What will the wicked do hereafter, when flames of fire shall gather them before the God who is consuming fire, to receive from him a sentence according to what they have here done in the flesh? And thus much for the first thing which was propounded to be spoken to in the Doctrinal Part of this Point.

The attendants about Gods Throne are a flame of fire.

I come now to the Second, and that is to shew how each Person in the Blessed Trinity is consuming fire: And this I may dispatch in few words; yet most is intended to be spoken about the Second Person.

First of all, The Father is consuming fire, or the first Person in order; here I shall not much more then name that one place, *Gen. 19. Then the Lord rained fire from the Lord out of Heaven; Jehovah from Jehovah*; the Son from the Father; for the Father worketh by the Son, *Joh. 5. 19. Jehovah the Son, rained down fire from Jehovah the Father, upon the wicked*

wicked Sodomites, who are set forth an example suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, *Jude 7*. We read elsewhere of the Fathers rewarding the righteous; and the Father who rewards such with promised glory, will also reward the wicked with deserved punishment.

2ly, The Second Person; or the Son of God, He is consuming fire also: The former instance about the *Sodomites* may be alledged for this; but there is other Scripture light, which I am willing to fetch in here also: 'Tis supposed, that the Text is to be understood principally at least of the Son: 'Tis clear, that God essentially, every Person is consuming fire, and so every person is included. But sinner, thou wilt wonder it may be, to hear that he who came to seek and to save the lost; that he whose Name is Jesus, *Matth. 1. 21*. which signifies a Saviour, and was given to him from the nature of the redeeming and saving work which he had undertaken, that he should be consuming fire; Thou wilt readily yield, 'tis like, that the Father is so; but that he whose merits considered with what God hath purposed, and promised, are the ground and foundation which sinners have propounded to them in the Gospel to build hopes of Heaven upon, that he should be devouring fire, this thou sayest, it may be, is very hard to believe; but whatever thy thoughts are, even this Jesus is a consuming fire. In the first Chapter of the *Revelations*, there is a large representation

tion of the Son of Man; and among other things, it is said of him, *That his Feet were like unto fine Brass, as if they burned in a Furnace, and his Eyes were as a flame of fire, ver. 14, 15.* There be two or three places more particularly, which I shall commend to you about this; to prove that Christ is not only fire, but will consume, and destroy such as do not come under the Scepter of his Word to be swayed and ruled by it; see *2 Thess. 1. 7, 8.* where 'tis said, *The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.* I know the appearance of Christ at his second coming will be very comfortable to the Saints; they have now cause to long for and desire it, and they will have then cause to rejoyce and triumph when this time of refreshing shall come: But it will be a very terrible, black, cloudy day to others; a day of gloominess and darkness, a day of perplexity and great distress; for Christ will come; but after what manner? in flaming fire; but what to do? to take vengeance; *This God to whom vengeance belongeth, will come to execute vengeance, to wash his feet, as it were, in the blood of the wicked:* But who are they upon whom Christ will execute vengeance? *on such as know not God; and obey not the Gospel;* upon all that know him not, whether Heathens, or such as pass for Christians, but are not renewed after the Image of God in knowledge; and upon all that obey

obey not the Gospel; though they do profess it, if they do not obey it, Christ will be terrible in his Appearing to them: to all that denyed him in their works, though did acknowledge him in their words: it follows, *who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power: they shall have the punishment of loss, of loss of God, of Heaven, of the company of Saints, and Angels; of those joys and pleasures which are at the right hand of God: and they shall have the punishment of seple; not only their tongues, but their souls and whole bodies shall lie tormented in the flame: they shall feel what 'tis to rebel against light; to reject an offered Saviour; to stand out against their own mercy: They shall eat of the fruit of their own ways, and be filled with their own devices; they shall have sorrow for their joy, and weeping for their laughter: Christ will reign till all his Enemies be made his footstool: Bring forth, he will say, all my Enemies, which would not have me to reign over them; and let them be slain before me, Luk. 19. 27. destroy those rebels who refused to come under my yoke; let them dye who would not come to me that they might live: See Psal. 2. 9. Ask of me, and I will give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance; and what follows: Thou shalt break them with a rod of Iron, thou shalt break them in peeces like a Potters Vessel; an Iron rod falls heavy, it will grip, as it were, to powder;*

powder; by thy Almighty Arm and righteous judgement shalt thou destroy the wicked with a heavy destruction: and see *Rev. 6. ult.* *They said to the Mountains and Rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitt upon the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?* You see the Lamb; who is said to be meek and lowly, hath wrath: Indeed, this Lamb of God who was sacrificed for the sheep, and cherisheth his tender ones in his bosom, dealing very gently with them, will be as dreadful as a Lyon to rend the cawl of the heart of the wicked, to tear in peices the Wolves, and none shall rescue them out of his hands: yea the great God and Saviour will be more dreadful then a Lyon; that can but rend and kill the body; but Christ will rend and kill the soul too: I might enlarge upon this, but shall proceed.

3^{ly}. The Holy Ghost, the third Person of the Trinity, he is fire, and consuming fire too; he is said to be fire with respect to his purifying and cleansing of Believers: we read in *Matth. 3. 11.* of Christ *Baptizing with the Holy Ghost, and with fire;* as if it had been said, with the fiery Holy Ghost, whose work and property it is to refine and purifie as fire doth; but that may fall in elsewhere: but now further, see *Revel. 4. 7.* *And there were seven Lamps of fire burning before the Throne, which are the seven spirits of God;* I understand it of the Holy Ghost whose power

power is most perfect, and who is manifold in his operations: and 'tis very evident by what is mentioned, *Heb. 3.* from the 7. verse to the 12. that the Holy Spirit is full of consuming displeasure towards such as are stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart, and go on still resisting him, and refusing to obey his voyce; wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, *To day if you will hear his voyce, harden not your hearts:* but they rebelled against, and vexed his Holy Spirit; their brow was of Brass, and their neck Iron; they stopped their ears, and would not hearken; but see the 10. & 11. verses, *Wherefore I was grieved with that Generation, and said, they do alwayes erre in their hearts, and do not know my wayes; so I sware in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest:* persons ordinarily make nothing of despising and slighting the Spirit in his motions and treaties with them about their souls: Ministers they preach, and the Spirit goeth out with the Word, so that now and then some are in a common way enlightened; and others it may be under a further work of the Spirit, come to have some taste of the Word, and of the powers of the World to come, and thereupon escape the grosser pollutions of the world; and so it is with others sometimes upon the awakening of Conscience by occasion of some sickness, or it may be some great token in the Heaven, or in the Earth, of Gods displeasure, or the execution of a great judgement upon others, which they either see, or hear of; yet after a while;

while, they lick up their old vomit, or like the washed Sow tumble in the mire; are as stupid and as filthy, and as abominable in their lives as before, in despite of all remorse of Conscience, and all convictions, and all such importunate pleadings of the Spirit as these: Sinner, Why wilt thou dye? What dost thou mean, that thou dost run upon the Swords point? Why wilt thou serve such hard and cruel Masters as Sin and Satan? Why dost thou kick against the pricks? Why dost thou cast thy self into the fire? Why wilt thou do this and that abominable thing? Turn that thou mayst live: *How long you simple ones will you love simplicity, and fools delight in scorning?* yet, after so many repulses and denyals, obey my voyce, and former resistance and opposition shall be forgiven: but all this is slighted and trodden upon, and imprisoned, and stifled in the case of the most: But Sinner, hear what the Lord saith; his *Spirit shall not always strive*, Gen. 6. 3. such as set at naught all his counsel, and will have none of his reproofs, shall feel the dreadful effects of his Almighty power in their utter ruine: so that you see every Person in the Trinity is consuming fire; and every Person will have a hand in the sinners destruction: And so much for the second thing to be spoken to.

I come now to the Third, which is to discover in some particulars, to whom the Lord who is consuming fire, will be so terrible as hath been mentioned.

First

First of all, a little more generally; He will be a consuming fire to all who remain still in their unbelief and impenitency; see *Rom. 1. 18. The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the Truth in unrighteousness*: and *Rom. 2. 9. Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile: The soul that sinneth, and repenteth not, shall dye*: and see *Matth. 13. 41, 42.*

He will be a consuming fire to all that bring not forth good fruit: *Matth. 3. 10. Every Tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire*: 'Tis not said there, they that bring forth evil fruit; men may perish for not well-doing as well as for evil doing; If thou couldst say, with respect to the outward act, I am no Drunkard, no Adulterer, no Injurious dealer, no Sabbath-breaker, and the like; yet thy condition may be very sad for omissions of Praying, Reading, Hearing, Instructing thy Children and Servants, and for leaving undone reproving, conferring about the things of God, Meditation, Communing with thine own heart, of trying thy own ways, and the like; thou mayst come under the scorching heat of Gods fiery wrath; and elsewhere it is said, *Cast the unprofitable servant into utter darkness*, *Matth. 25. 30.* for napkining up a Talent; for not using and exercising common gifts and graces; for not imploying time, and for not improving and honouring God with

with thy parts and abilities, thou may'st come under that heavy sentence ; and in the same Chapter we have a particular account of some proceedings at the last day ; Christ will say to some at his left hand , whom he bids depart, *v. 42, 43. I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat ; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink ; naked, and ye clothed me not ; sick, and in prison, and you visited me not : 'Tis not said, You took away my cloathing, and you snatcht the bread from between my teeth, and plucked away the cup from my mouth, and threw me into Prison : but you did not give meat, and drink, and raiment ; the bowels of your compassion was shut up towards me, and you did not relieve me ; though possibly like Naphthali, Gen. 49. 21. some of them might give goodly words, saying, Be clothed, and be warmed, and be filled, and depart in peace, James 2. 16. yet because they did not give those things that were needful for the body, nor visit Christ in his imprisoned members, he will say, Go ye cursed : for not using the means of Grace well ; for not executing that which is just, and right, when it is in the power of thy hands ; for not cutting off right hands ; for not plucking out right eyes ; for not crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts of it.*

But I come now to speak a little more particularly about this, to shew to whom God will be a consuming fire.

1. He will be terrible to such as have engaged in a Profession of Religion, and finally
F
forsake

forfake it: to such as turn away from God, and the holy Commandement delivered to them; see *Heb.* 10. 26, 27. Apostates are adversaries, and God hath many threatnings in his Word against them: and they have ground to look for judgement and fiery indignation; and when God doth let their Consciences loose to accuse them, and to set their sins in order before them, and to condemn them, there doth use to be a fearful expecting of the revelation of the just wrath and vengeance of God: Church Histories do abound in instances about this; but I shall only speak of that which we read in the Scripture about *Judas*, who took money of the Priests to betray his Master, which became fuel for great perplexity and anguish a little after in his soul, when God did set the guilt of it before him: it took such hold of his Conscience, and made such great breaches upon his spirit, that a confession of his sin in betraying innocent blood, *Matth.* 27. 4. could bring in no ease and refreshing to him: the sin sweet 'tis like to his distempered palate in committing, was now in the remembrance and review even as bitter or more bitter then death: The Chief Priests and Elders, who had been so forward to draw the poor wretch to sin, having thereby the bloody purposes of their hearts in part fulfilled, lookt no more after him: when *Judas* sweltering under the fearful apprehensions of Gods wrath, said, *I have sinned*; they answered, *What is that to us? see thou to that*: What miserable comforters

forerers were these ! they cared not though he did perish. Apostates are like to find but little pity and compassion from those who speak fairly ; and promise largely before they have their ends upon them : They are cruel to their own souls, who set themselves against the Lord, and against his Anointed ; and no wonder if they are cruel and merciless to the souls of sinners : But that by the way : *I have sinned*, Judas said ; he is his own Accuser ; and afterwards destroyed himself, and so was his own Executioner. When Divine Justice doth pursue a sinner, and he seeks not refuge in the mercy of God through Christ, he needs no other judge or witness then his own Conscience ; that is enough to arraign and to pass sentence upon, and to torment ; so that a person under the curbs and lashes of it, is like to choose strangling rather then life : But that remedy, if we might so call it, is worse then the disease : He was beaten with a whip before, but afterwards with Scorpions ; his way for cure proved the increase of his malady and torment : Oh the fearful shrieks and outcries which have come from some Apostates, when their iniquity hath found them out, and stared them in the face ; and the dreadful guilt of their base compliances, and shameless disowning and denying of the known Truth hath taken hold of them, and beset them behind and before, calling for vengeance, and binding them over to a fearful expectation of deserved and threatened punishment ! The greatest fury of the most malicious oppressor with-

out could not be so terrible and affrighting as the clamours of an awakening guilty Conscience within : this sin lying at the door , and ever ready to take the sinner by the throat, and bring him before the Tribunal of God to be judged by him, whom he hath denyed, hath made the poor creature to be in continual bondage through fear of death : but however it be with such persons here, for 'tis possible through extream hardness and blindness, the Consciences of some may be past feeling, yet their damnation doth not slumber ; their iniquity is bound up ; and how little so ever it be feared, will bring upon them swift destruction : God will destroy them that go a whoring from him, *Psal* 73.8. *Heb.* 10. 38, 39. *If any man draw back, he saith, my soul shall have no pleasure in him : There is a judgment in these words ; less is expressed then is intended ; they import utter dislike, great abhorrency and abomination ; their souls loath God, and Gods soul doth loath and abhor them : Psal.* 125. 5. *As for such who turn aside to their crooked wayes, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of Iniquity ; and Isai.* 1. 28. *They that forsake the Lord shall be consumed :* The latter end of Apostates is worse then their beginning : and it had been better in regard of the greatness and increase of their torment by the occasion hereof, that they had never known the way of God, then after they had known it, to turn from it : *2^d Pet.* chap. 2. about the latter end. Apostates do cast much reproach and disparagement upon the good

good way of the Lord: and he will vindicate the credit of this way, make the glory of it to shine forth as the noon-day, and make men to see, that it was an evil thing, and bitter, to forsake the Lord: He will get himself praise, and a Name upon such persons in their ruine.

2. God will be very terrible, even a consuming fire to all such as hate him, who in their hearts despise and abhor his righteous Statutes. Now, the haters of God are all such as do not love him in sincerity; for there is no middle thing between love and hatred: And if any man love God, he will keep his words, *Joh. 14. 23.* so that whosoever the person be, whether poor or rich, whether bond or free, that doth not take the Scripture for his rule, and in uprightness of heart set himself to order his conversation according to it, he is no other then a hater of God, whether the person guilty doth confess and acknowledge this or no. But how will the Lord deal with such? you may see it your selves, if you will but consider a place or two which I may offer from the Scripture hereabouts: *Deut. 7. 10.* *God will repay them that hate him to their face, to destroy them:* repay him, or recompence him with vengeance or punishment; he walked contrary to God, and God will make him to see and feel that he will walk contrary to him. But how long will it be before the Lord will repay him? It follows, *He will not be slack to him that hateth him: he will repay him:* The time hasteneth in which this word of threatening shall be fulfilled;

filled; he will do it, he will do it; he speaks
 in once and again, that you may take the
 more notice of what he saith, and be stirred
 up to consider it. God is a sure Pay-Master;
 whether of the promised free reward of glory
 to the righteous, or of the threatened deserved
 reward of punishment to the wicked: and see
 to the same purpose, *Psal. 21. 8, 9. Thy hand
 shall find out all thy Enemies, thy right hand shall
 find out those that hate thee*: It will be in vain
 to say, O Mountains cover us, O Hills fall up-
 on us; there will be no flying from his pre-
 sence: If you could fly to the uttermost parts
 of the Earth, he would search you out; the
 Sea shall give up its dead, and the Earth its
 dead: no place shall afford a shelter to any
 Enemy of God. But what if God doth find
 them out, is there any great matter in that?
 Yes, and that the experience of the haters of
 God will in a short time teach them too. God
 hath neither right hand, nor left hand, to speak
 properly; but 'tis a speech after the manner
 of men, who have both: and their right hand
 is strongest; so that I tell you, The strong
 Arm of him who is a God of Vengeance, will
 find out the wicked to execute upon them
 what the word threatens against them. But
 how will God deal with them? see the next
 verse in that Psalm; *Thou shalt put, or set them
 as 'tis in the Hebrew, as an Oven, or Furnace of
 Fire at the time of thy faces*; which is there
 put for anger, and the word notes very great
 anger; *In the time when thy wrath, or an-
 gers do burn against them: Jehovah shall swal-*

low them up in his wrath, and the fire shall consume them. Sinner, Is thy Conscience dead asleep, without all remorse and feeling? How is it such a place as this doth not affrighten and amaze thee? Will God do this great thing, and yet wilt thou be regardless of this displeasure? Carest thou not that thy soul perish, though it be cast into a fiery Oven to be fewel still for the destroying fury of an angry God? What if it were but such an Oven where you bake your bread, if it were much heated, and you were thrown in, and had it stopr up upon you, and the heat were to continue still, and you to remain there alive, could you endure it well enough think you? But alas, What is such a fiery Oven to the fiery Oven of Hell, made and heated by God, and kept hot and burning by him too? Think upon it in time; if once you come into this Oven, God who hath the Keys of Hell and Death, he will shut thee in, he will stop up this Oven; and then who is there that shall open it? Rev. 1. 18,

3. God will be terrible to such as walk after the flesh in the lusts of uncleanness, 2 Pet. 2. 9, 10. *God knoweth how to reserve the unjust to be punished*; and there is a *μάρισα*, a chiefly, and principally, put upon them, *who walk in the lusts of uncleanness*, and so on: These are some of the sinners who shall be the chiefest Buts against whom God will shoot the fiery and invenomed Arrows of his wrath; they shall have some of the hottest places in Hell, who fulfilled the burning desires of the flesh

in this thing, and the lusts of it : there is much in the Scripture to this purpose, *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge ; to wit, with a judgement of condemnation ; 'tis said of the whorish woman, Prov. 7. ult. Her house is the way to Hell, going down to the Chambers of Death : her foolish Paramour goeth to her house as an Oxe to the slaughter, ver. 22. As a Bird that goeth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life, vers. 23. and so with respect to the same thing, see what is mentioned, Prov. 6. 27, 28. Can a man take fire in his bosome, and his clothes not be burnt ? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt ? And see vers. 32. Who so committeth Adultery with a woman, lacketh understanding ; he that doth it, destroyeth his own soul : Fornicators and Adulterers, for their Bed of forbidden pleasure, shall be cast into a Bed together by God, a bed of fire ; where the remembrance of their past jollity will rather torment then ease and refresh.*

sly. God will be terrible, even a consuming fire to proud persons : Sometimes in his temporal judgements he entrencheth into a very sharp controversie with them, *Jer. 50. 31, 32. Behold, I am against thee O most proud ; and they shall stumble and fall ; and it shall devour all round about him ; and so Isai. 2. 11, 12. The day of the Lord shall be upon the proud and lofty, and they shall be brought low : God hath a very sharp and hot contest with many such, before the world here, who in the pride of their life say, Who is the Lord that we should obey his*
voyce ?

voyes? we will do what seemeth good in our own
 eyes; God doth make men to see that in the
 thing wherein they deal prondly, he is above
 them: And sure the Lord will have a never
 ending controversie with such hereafter; *God*
resisteth the proud, James 4. 7. He stands out in
 battle array, and professeth open defiance and
 hostility against them: though he be neer to
 the humble; yet *he beholdeth the proud afar*
off: And indeed, the glory of God is more
 then ordinarily concerned to avenge himself
 upon these who rob him so much of his ho-
 nor; of the honour of his Wisdom, of the
 honour of his Sovereignty, and the like; now
 the Lord is a jealous God, and he will have the
 glory of his Justice upon them, *Mal* 4. 1.
The day cometh that shall burn as an Oven, and
all the proud, and all that do wickedly shall be
strubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them
up; to give you one instance more; Anti-
 christ is very imperious, exceeding proud,
2 Thess. 2. 4. *He opposeth and exalteth himself*
above all that is called God; so that as God he
 sitteth in the Temple of God; Pride com-
 passeth him about as a chain; he saith, *Behold*
I sit as a Queen! *Revel.* 18. 7. his claims are
 very high, he taketh very much upon him,
 and would develt Christ of all his glory in
 his three great Offices; but God will have this
 man of Sin down; and his fall shall be sudden,
 and shameful, and wonderful; let the Believer
 wait a while longer, and he shall see the Sal-
 vation of God: The Prophecie shall be turned
 into a History, *Babylon is fallen*; and Gods
 wrath

wrath will be very terrible against her; *The seven Horns*, when God shall turn their hearts against the Whore, *shall hate her, and make her desolate, and burn her with fire*; Rev. 17. 16. God will terribly destroy Antichrist, so that her Merchants shall stand afar off, for fear of the Lord when his wrath is broken out: and God hath reserved very terrible destruction for him hereafter; see Rev. 19. 20. *And the Beast was taken, and with him the false Prophet; these were both cast into a Lake of Fire burning with Brimstone.*

6ly, God will be very terrible, even a consuming fire to such as are scorers and mockers of Religion, and the holy things of God, and the People of God: *Surely he scorneth the Scorers*, Prov. 3. 24. and in another place, *Judgements are prepared for scorers*, Prov. 19. 29. Oh the scoffing and the scorning that there is in some, at the way that is called Holy! the power of godliness is derided by many who have but the form: He that departeth from evil, as he maketh himself a prey, so he maketh himself a reproach; the Word of the Lord in their mouths is to them a reproach; every one almost mocketh at them; they are the Song of the Drunkards; prophane *Ismael's* set at naught the Heirs of the Promise: They who are after the flesh, persecute thus such as are after the spirit. Gal. 4. 29. How are the Commands of God reproached as too strict, and the threatnings of God as if they were like wind, and would never bring forth what they seem to travel in birth with!

with ! that is a bitter jeer against God and his Word, *Isai. 3. 19. They draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work that we may see it : Let the counsel of the Holy One draw nigh, that we may know it : They speak as if they did not credit a word which the Prophet said ; as if it were all a meer mockery ; a meer scare-crow to frighten men ; they say, as it were, We would see the evil day which he talks so much of : But God will recompence their wickedness upon their heads ; he will make them to know whose word shall stand, his, or theirs : see vers. 24. As the fire devoureth the stubble, so their Rock shall be rottenness ; and so on, vers. 25. Therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against them : and see what follows : In outward judgements here, God doth sometimes plead his cause very signally against them ; but to be sure, they shall not escape the vengeance to come : we read *2 Pet. 3. 3.* of some scoffers prophesied of to come forth in these last days, men walking after their own lusts, and speaking as if the promise of Christ coming would fail ; but see what is mentioned, *vers. 7. The Heavens and the Earth are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men : and scorners are some of the chaffe spoken of, Psal. 1. 4. which the wind driveith away, and the fire consumeth ; for there is mention of such before ; and see vers. 5. too, Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgement ; nor sinners in the Congregation of the just : Scorners*
are*

are some of those who shall not stand in judgement; *stand*, let that word be observed; 'tis not said, not come to judgement; but they shall not stand, not stand with boldness and comfort, not lift up their faces with joy or comfort; or as is mentioned afterwards; *Not stand among the godly; not stand in the company of the righteous*; for the judgement day will be a parting day wherein the ungodly shall be severed from the righteous, never come to converse with them more.

7. God will be terrible, even a consuming fire to the covetous; to all who love the world and the things of it; and particularly to such of them who injure and oppress others in Goods or Estate, in outward matters appertaining to them, *James 5. 1, 2, 3. Go to ye rich men; weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you: your riches are corrupted, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and eat your flesh as it were fire: for ye have heaped up treasures against the last days: By Treasures unjustly gotten, persons do treasure up wrath against the last day, when Gods vengeance is to be revealed against the unrighteous, the rusty Gold, and the moth-eaten Garments, and the right of others detained, as in the next verse, will make a pile of fire to burn them. But there is oppression not only from the rich (though there is most that way) but also from the poor; and that place will reach in all, 1 Thess. 4. 6. That no man over-reach or deceive his Brother in any matter; for the Lord is the avenger of such, as we have*

have foretold and testified : in 2 Pet. 2. 14. such whose hearts are exercised with covetous practices, are called *curst children* : Now such as are cursed by God, shall be consumed with the fire of his wrath.

8. God will be terrible to such as are idle, and to such as are drunkenous and gluttonous, and consume their precious days in vanity : Gentlemen, and many others, who have no honest imployment in Church or State, or Family, or any other way, little consider the danger of this ; or those who it may be now and then do a little in some honest affair, yet for the most part eat the bread of idleness, little consider this : I would have you to think upon *Sodom*, some of whose sins are idleness and fulness of bread, *Ezek. 16. 49.* as well as pride and haughtiness, and not strengthening the hands of the poor ; and you have heard before what became of them, how the fire of Gods wrath burned them ; and how they are set forth an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Is idleness under the Sun-shine of the Gospel, a lesser sin then in that place of Ignorance, that you should promise your selves peace, though you exceed your Sister *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, as was said in effect of the *Jews* heretofore, and justify their abominations ? but *God is no respecter of persons* ; and if you dye in your sins, it shall be more intolerable for you then for *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* in the day of judgement : see *Prov. 13. 4.* *The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath not ; there is nothing to him, it being a cold with a raw velleity,*

sloth, when he hangeth upon his hinges,
 and refuseth to labour, his desire is not satis-
 fied: In outward concerns, many slog-
 gards who desire food, pinch, because they
 will not work; and so their expectation fail-
 eth them of heaven, and glory, because they
 will not take pains about their souls; their
 naked wishes and desires bring in nothing;
 they cry out with Baalam, *Oh that I may dye
 the death of the righteous, that my latter end may
 be like his;* but they that will not live the
 active diligent life of such in exercises of god-
 liness, shall not dye their death: *They that sow
 in righteousness, shall reap in joy; but they that
 sow to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption:*
 and 'tis a heavy doom that is pronounced up-
 on the wicked and slothful servant, *Mat. 25.
 26.* compared with the 30. and no drunkard,
 'tis said; *shall any inheritance in the Kingdom of
 God:* And the wicked Glutton who liveth in
 pleasure, and nourisheth his heart as in a day
 of slaughter shall perish, *Jam. 5. 3, 5.* the
 old world *did eat, and drink;* they did immoderately
 use the good creatures of God, *and
 the flood came and destroyed them;* Luke 17. 27.
 and the world that perished, *2 Pet. 2. 5.* and
1 Pet. 3. 19. The spirits of this world of the un-
 godly are said to be in prison; that is, in the Pri-
 son of Hell: and 'tis said expressly, that *in the
 days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, and were de-
 stroyed with fire;* Luk. 17. 28, 29. How many
 be there in our days who do nothing almost
 but eat, and drink, and glut themselves with
 carnal delights, as if th's were the end of their
 Creation?

Creation? How many Tables are full of vomit, and filthiness, so that there is no place clean! and this is a great occasion of their going by Troops (as if they should say, we care not who see us) into Harlots houses, *Jer.* 5. 7, 8. but shall not God be avenged of such persons as these; yes, he will be avenged of them, and that speedily; their sin cryeth so loud in his ears, to allude to some Scripture expressions, as if he could not sit quiet in Heaven till he ease himself of them: but Gods easing of himself, and stilling his Spirit by punishing them will be their torment and sorrow.

oly, I might give other particular Instances; God will be terrible to such also as despise his Sabbath, and care not for his holy and pure Ordinances, cast off Prayer, and care not for his Word preached; he will be terrible to all those to whom his Ordinances are grievous, who snuffe at his Worship, and say, *Behold, What a weariness is it? when will the Sabbath be gone, that we may set forth Wheat, and make the Ephah small, and sell the poor for a pair of Shoes?* *Mal.* 1. 13. *Amos* 8. 5, 6. How often were the *Jews* charged with polluting the Sabbaths! and the same complaint may be drawn up against the men of this generation; 'tis very poor and slender worship that the great God is put off with: the halt, the lame, and the blind, and every thing is reckoned good enough for him: There is a male among the flock, but they sacrifice a corrupt thing, and also content themselves with a little bodily

dily exercise: And many are vain, and loose, and frothy in their words and conversation, the greater part of such days: that is the day which some find their own pleasures most in; they rob God of his honour all the week; and as if that were not enough, they rob God of his own peculiar day also: The *Jews* were not left unpunished for this, *Jer. 17. ult.* God did threaten, because of their Sabbath-breaking, to kindle a fire in the Gates of *Jerusalem*, which should not be quenched; and God hath contended by fire with many in our Nation for this sin, of which there is some publick account given to the world already. What a wonder of patience is it, that fire from Heaven hath not burnt the houses which are over our heads, and Towns, and Cities, and the Nation about our heads; for the mighty Sabbath provocations which have been found among us? God hath promised a blessing to those that sanctifie the Sabbath aright, who make that day their delight, and with pure hearts diligently serve the holy God therein, *Isai. 56. 2.* and so on: and see *ver. 6. & Isai. 58.* and the two last verses: and a spiritual discharge of Sabbath-work may have great effluence through the gracious working of God, to maintain a course of holy conversing with God in the week, which should greatly encourage us to remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy: read and study the *84. Psalm* throughout, & *Psal. 92.* and see *Psal. 27. 4.* The Sabbath-day should be counted the best day: the Souls chief Feast-day: How refreshing

freshing and reviving is Communion with Father, and Son, and Spirit? What strength would this be to the spirit? What health, as it were, to the navel? How would it sweeten crosses? how would it sweeten even death itself? The favour and loving kindness of God, 'tis the happiness and comfort of every state: Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy, that God may remember thee with his tender mercies all the week after. Heavy is the wrath that is like to be the sad portion of all the prophane despisers of Gods Word and Sabbath. And thus much for the third thing propounded to be spoken to in the Doctrinal Part of this Point.

I come now to the fourth, and that is this; *To discover why the Lord will be so terrible in his dealings with the wicked, as to consume and destroy them with the fire of his wrath:* And the first shall be this; *Because they are appointed herunto.* We read in the Scripture of *Vessels of honour, and dishonour*, 2 Tim. 2. 22, & Rom. 9. 21, 22. of vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, as well as of vessels of mercy fitted and prepared for glory: Though God may bear long, yet at last the vessels of dishonour shall have the place which they are fitting and preparing themselves for.

2. *God will consume the wicked because of their wickedness.* Sin doth come between the Decree of Reprobation and the Execution of it upon the ungodly. The Apostle, Ephes. 5. having reckoned and counted up a great many sins, he saith, v. 6. *Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*

dience. *Let no man deceive you with vain words :* Some may think otherwise, and some may labour to perswade you otherwise ; you may cry peace to your selves ; and others daubing with untempered mortar, may also speak peace to you for all this : but whatever you may say, or whatever others may say to the contrary ; wrath will be the portion of the children of disobedience. Sin hath kindled the fire, *Isai.* 33. 11. *You shall conceive chaffe, you shall bring forth stubble, your breath as fire shall devour you :* Your sin shall be the cause of your ruine : you your selves have kindled the fire that shall burn you : *Wickedness burns as the fire, and the wicked shall be fuel for the fire, Isai.* 9. 18, 19. Wickedness burneth, 'tis said there, as the fire, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire : Sin makes the sinner, as it were, combustible matter, as it were, proper fuel for the fire of Hell : They are good for nothing but to be burned: The Church is compared to the Vine-tree; and of that 'tis said, if it be barren and unfruitful, it is good for nothing ; *Exek.* 25. 6. but for the fire : it is not meet, as is there said, for any work ; Why so ? God having planted you like a vine, in a fruitful hill, by the way ; know, that after all the dunging and dressing, he expects fruit, and fruit answerable to the excellency of the means which you enjoy, and to the store and plenty and variety of means. But now after all, If you do not bring forth good, but evil fruit, you are not fit for any place in the Mansion-house of Glory, and so shall be made as fuel for the fire : *Isai.* 33. 11. the people shall be as the burnings of L-me ;
mens

mens lusts are now raging and violent, and impetuous; they bear down all before them, all counsels, and exhortations, and warnings, and instructions of Ministers and private Christians: Mens wickedness is flaming like fire, *Hos. 7. 6, 7. They have made ready their heart like an Oven*; in the Hebrew it is *Kerbu*, which *Kerbu* signifies they have applied; or rather, *They have made their hearts draw near*; they did give themselves to sin, and set themselves to work wickedness; they thought they could never have enough of sin; instead of putting it far away, they drew it neer to them: it follows, *Their Baker sleepeth not all the night; in the morning it burneth like a flaming fire*; they are at their ungodly work day and night; their thoughts run upon it in the night; in the morning the fire breaketh out into a flame: and in the 7. verse, 'tis said, *They are all hot as an Oven*; and vers. 4. *They are Adulterers, as an Oven heated by the Baker*: and so we may apply it to other sins; they are as hot with them as an Oven: an Oven burns inward, and the fire breaks outward too: And 'tis far and near that the fire of some mens sins more especially doth spread; it sets their whole body on fire, and many others also on fire: as an Oven that is heated, sometimes occasioneth the burning of the house where 'tis heated, and of many other houses also.

We read in the Scripture of some burning in their lusts, *Rom. 1. 27. men are often very eager and fiery; they are hot upon sin; they are as War-horses, full fed; they will have*

their sins whatever they cost them: though they are told they must have Hell then too: *Job. 8. 44. The lusts of your Father you will do:* and seeing persons are so mad upon their sins, and burn in their lusts and desires after them, God will cast them into burning, *into the burning flame, Dan. 7. 11.* The tongue of the wicked is often as fire: *Prov. 26. 23.* and in another place, *their tongue is set on fire of Hell,* James 3. and being kindled of Hell, it shall be cast in thither with other parts of the body, and the soul also. I may allude to that place, *Exod. 21. 25.* where we have these words, *burning for burning*; for the fire of sin, they shall have the fire of Hell: they must thank themselves for the destruction which they meet with; this is the bitter fruit of the wickedness which burned in their hearts: O poor soul! thou dost destroy thy self: as you are increasing the heap of sin; so God is filling up the treasures of wrath: Is it not fit that workmen should have their wages? why now, *The wages of sin is death*, eternal death: you are sowing sin, and you are like to reap wrath.

3. *God will consume the wicked for the vindicating of his truth, which men do call so much in question.* How often do we read of this, and that done, that the Scripture may be fulfilled: Sometimes promises, and sometimes threatenings: When the Word is gone forth out of Gods mouth, he doth look after it, and will not let the least portion of truth fall to the ground till it be accomplished; for *God cannot lye, Tit. 1. 2.* He will be true, though vain men

men should never so much falsifie their word: Now see how the Truth of God is engaged for this, I mean, for the destroying of the wicked: see *Heb. 6. 8.* *The ground which beareth Thorns and Briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned:* and so *Exod. 34. 7.* where we read of Gods not holding guiltless; he will not hold the wicked guiltless. But now, this must be understood with the exception of free Grace revealed in the Gospel, in the case of interveening Faith and Repentance: But otherwise, God will not spare; he hath said, that *the soul that sinneth shall die;* dye, not only temporally, but eternally, without Conversion and Regeneration; without sound believing in Christ: Though the wicked say, their end shall be peace, yet the Lord saith their end shall be destruction: this we tell the people from the Word of Truth; but who believeth our report? Nay, rather, many speak, as if God would deny himself, and be a lyer, to gratifie them in their lusts; but *the strength of Israel is not as man, that he should lye, or the son of man, that he should repent;* he will be faithful and true in his sayings, and in this particularly, that *the wicked shall be cast into Hell with all that forget God,* *Psal. 9. 17.*

4 God will do it to manifest to the world his great hatred and detestation of sin: What a light thing is sin in the account of many; one they say is a little one, and so another: and they speak of some evils of sin, that they are so small, as that they are not worth a

mentioning: and some will talk, as if God were such a one as themselves: as if such as do wickedly, were very good in his sight, and as if he took pleasure in them: *Mal. 2. 17.* That the Lord is a countenancer and approver of evil: but see *Psal. 50. 21.* *I will reprove thee saith God, and set thy sins in order before thy eyes:* God will marshal them up, as it were, rank and file; though thou put them behind thy back, the Lord will set them before thy face: thou sayest, it may be, God hideth his face, he will not see it, but let such despisers of God know, that all your iniquities are marked before him, *Jer. 2. 22.* Thy most secret sins are in the light of his countenance; but yet remember withal, that he is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with him: *The foolish shall not stand in his sight, he hateth all the workers of iniquity, Psal. 5. 5.* And the wicked shall know this to their great shame and confusion in the great day, when God will bring all their old forgotten sins fresh to their remembrance, and say, this and that you have done, *Jer. 2. 23.* In such a house and valley, such an abomination; in such a chamber, and in such company, such abominations, such idle words, such vain and unprofitable discourse; such scoffing at Religion, such unrighteousness in dealing, such alluring and provoking others to sin: such mad laughter, such lying and such swearing; such prophaning my Name; for so long time together there was no Reading, or Prayer; and when it was once begun, thou didn't

thou didst wish it over, and it was all in meer formality, and customariness; your duties were all dead; dead Preaching, and dead Praying; and dead Fasting, and dead Conferring about the matters of Religion; for so much time of your lives God was not in all your thoughts; such and such were your sins, and lo now my day of wrath being come, you shall bear the punishment of them; I did still hate the deeds of the ungodly: let all the world see, and hear, I declare it now by the terrible effects of my sore displeasure in rewarding you according to the evils you have done in the flesh.

5. *God will do it to make men confounded, and ashamed, because of their vain hopes and confidences:* The Lord doth now debate the matter with mens Consciences who pretend to Faith, and Hope, and other Graces; and that they are passed from death to life, when they are fast bound in the cords of their iniquities, and meer strangers to any saving work: We read of the *Jews*, who spake and did evil things as they could, *Jer. 2. 5.* and yet said to God, *My Father*, in the verse before: and so *Hos. 8. 2, 3.* *Israel shall say to me, my God, though he did cast off the thing that was good:* Who almost now, but saith, the Lord is my God, and Christ my Saviour? I have the Faith that is saving, and the Repentance that is unto life, who yet are unbelievers and impenitent ones: and such is the course of many persons lives; that judicious observers may say of many, there is no

fear of God before their eyes; they have no Faith in Christ that is saving; they do but talk of repentance, being very far from the sense of sin and godly sorrow, and right obedience which the Scripture calls for. Now the Lord saith to men in his Word; *How can ye say that ye are not polluted?* Jer. 2. 23. May not you be ashamed to justify your selves after this manner, to speak of your selves as innocent, when your wickedness is so palpable and evident? and there needs no searching to discover and find it out, as is afterwards in effect mentioned: and so the voyce of the Lord cryeth out; *What profit is it that a man say, he hath Faith and not Works; Can that Faith save him?* James 2. 14. Such a dead liveless Faith, a meer verbal Profession. Is that like to advantage him for Justification, or for Salvation? Alsoon may a shadow of meat nourish, and the shadow of drink satisfie thirst, and a vain dream of a Mountain of Gold and Silver make rich, as such a faith fetch in any spiritual meat and drink to feed and nourish the Soul to eternal life: 'Tis a working faith that is a saving faith: They that are *Abraham's* children, do the works of *Abraham*. There is much in the Scripture for the discovery of the spiritual nakedness of persons, who think themselves cloathed with Christs Righteousness, and of the emptiness of grace that is in many persons who think themselves rich, and increased in spiritual goods, and the like; and yet 'tis ordinary for the ungodly to say, they have
repentance

repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ.

The form is taken for the power, and the shadow for the substance, and the picture for the true life of grace and holiness: where almost is the person, but will say, *The Lord is my portion; and Heaven is my Inheritance;* building upon the Sand is counted building upon the Rock: experience hath abundantly taught me, that there is, who saith, he is rich, and yet he hath nothing; that saith, he is alive, and yet is dead: God is greatly dishonoured by the groundless claims of men, of peace, and reconciliation to him, when their lives do proclaim their enmity against him; but God will at the last day before men and Angels, declare, that such and such were never justified, and so never at peace with him: that he was still their enemy, and that they had never any encouragement from him to say what they did concerning themselves: the Lord will vindicate the innocency and holiness of his Word, and free it from the mistakes and abuses of those who did mis-interpret and mis-apply it for their strengthening of their groundless hopes of glory and salvation.

Lastly, God will be terrible to the wicked for the glorifying of his Justice: the Lord is righteous, and this Attribute he doth delight to extol and magnifie. There hath been a conceit among many, as if God did only delight in shewing mercy, because the Prophet in speaking of an Act of judgement, calls
it

it a work, a strange work, an act, a strange act; Isai. 28. 21. but if you diligently observe the place, you shall find the Prophet speaks of some wonderful and rare, and some very astonishing Act of Judgement and Justice; and this the instances there given do discover; where the Lord speaks of a rising up as in *Mount Perazim*; and of such a kind of wrath as in the *Valley of Gibeon*: They should be punished, but not after the ordinary manner: Expressions something like those of *Moses* against the Rebels. *Numb.* 16. 29. *That they should not dye the common death of all men, nor be visited after the Visitation of all men:* 'tis plain from the Scripture, that God delights in the execution of judgement and justice upon the wicked, *Psal.* 2. *He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh at them, the Lord shall have them in derision, when he comes to speak in his wrath, and vex the wicked in his sore displeasure:* and so *Prov.* 1. 26. *I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh:* and so in *Psal.* 37. 12, 13. *The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him, for he seeth that his day is coming.* Men by laughing discover the pleasure and delight they take in this, or that, which is the occasion of it; and the Scripture speaking of God after the manner of men, by this expression shews the joy and pleasure, that the God to whom vengeance doth belong, will take in executing vengeance; Woe be to the wicked when God laugheth at them; Gods laughrer shall

shall be their sorrow; Gods such smiling shall end in their weeping and howling. Who blames a Prince for executing a malefactor, whose crime is death by the Law of God? And who shall find fault with the King of Kings, the Judge of all the Earth, for inflicting deserved punishment on those who have sold themselves into the hands of Divine Justice, and are not rescued out? You will imprison men for a debt of money: Why should God be blamed for casting men into the Prison of Hell for sin, by which men are debtors to his Justice? *Rom. 3. 5. Is God unrighteous that taketh vengeance?* *unsworn.* 'tis in our Translation, *God forbid;* in the Greek, *Let it not be so:* the very thought of unrighteousness in God is blasphemy: 'tis a righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to such as trouble and afflict the Saints, *2 Theff. 1. 6, 7.* and so to all other sorts of sinners: *Isai. 3. 11. Woe to the wicked,* and it must needs go ill with him; *for the reward of his hands shall be given him.*

But now some may say, Can this which you have spoken of the terribleness of Gods displeasure, stand with what is mentioned about the mercy of God? Is it not said, *He is plenteous in mercy, and abundant in goodness?*

Answer, Indeed God is merciful; mercy pleaseth him, and he delighteth to shew mercy, *Mic. 7. 18.* Paul said, *he obtained mercy,* and that the grace of God was exceeding abundant with Faith and Love which was in Christ Jesus, *1 Tim.*

1 Tim. 1. 13, 14. and vers. 16. he tells us, *That for this cause he obtained mercy, that Christ may shew forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them, which hereafter believe in him:* The recorded experience of Paul should encourage others to hope, that they also may obtain mercy: The same infinite grace which pardoned his blasphemy, and persecution, and injurious dealing, may, and will pardon others who come to God by Christ.

2. Consider how the Scripture speaks about God with respect to his mercy, *Exod. 20. He sheweth mercy to them that love him:* and *Neh. 1. 5. He keepeth Covenant and mercy for them that love him, and observe his Commandments;* and *Psal. 103. 11. As the Heaven is high above the Earth, so great is his mercy to them that fear him.*

3. Thou must not think one Attribute in God doth clash with another: He is just as well as merciful; there is no variencie and strife between his Attributes: There be objects for mercy, and objects for revenging fury: Infiniteness runs through all Gods Attributes: He is infinite in Justice as well as in Mercy and Power; and where Patience hath done its work upon the ungodly, then the Hand of Justice will finde them out, and take them by the throat, and cast them for the debt of punishment into the Prison out of which they shall never come till they have paid the utmost farthing: And thus much for the Doctrinal Part.

I come now to the Application: And in the first place by way of Information to the Inferences and Conclusions which may be drawn from the Doctrine.

1. Is the great God a consuming fire? Oh the desperate Atheism then which discovers it self every day in men and women every where, who hear of the terrible wrath of this jealous and provoked God, and yet do not tremble and fear before him! The anger of man, whose breath is in his nostrils, doth very much affrighten and startle many: I have read of King *Agrippa* that he was so terrified with the words of the displeased Emperor *Caius Caesar*, that he had no strength almost left in him, he reeled and staggered, and would have fallen down to the ground if he had not been supported by some that were near to him: And when *Herod* was highly displeased with the men of *Tyre*, how deeply were they affected with it, and come with one accords desiring peace, because their Country was nourished by the Kings Country, *Act. 12. 20.* What trembling is there in man at the angry words of an earthly King? his wrath is as the roaring of a Lyon, *Prov. 19. 12.* It makes even the very hairs of some to stand an end, and their bones to shake and quiver in them: But oh the common and monstrous fearlessness that there is at the most angry words of an Almighty God! Whither shall we go to find the person that doth stand in aw of him, though he speak and write never so many bitter curses against them? they should cry out

out as the men of Bethshemesh, when the Lord smote the people for looking into the Ark, 1 Sam. 6. 20. *Who is able to stand before the Holy Lord God?* but God may complain of this people as heretofore of the Jews, Jer. 44. 10. *They are not humbled unto this day, neither have they feared: and Jer. 2. 10. They have forsaken the Lord, and my fear is not in them;* this people have a revolting heart; they do not say, let us fear God, though he cloaths and nourishes us, and hath our breath and life in his hands: though he loads them with benefits, and fills their houses with good things, yet they do not fear him: though he threaten judgement in his Word, and by his Providences, yet they do not fear, nor depart from evil: neither the voyce of his first sign, nor of his later sign is hearkened to; his hand is lifted up, and they will not see; 'tis laid on, and they will not feel: the fire of outward judgments doth not move them, nor the threatened flames of Hell fire; say what he will, or do, still men are like stocks and stones, men will not fear. Oh that men should be feared, who can but kill the body; and that God should not be feared, who can destroy soul and body in Hell fire!

2. Is God consuming fire? then how easily can he destroy such as hate him; much more easily can he consume these, then our hottest fire the least combustible matter that is cast into it; if he arise to destroy, they will perish before him; he can look the proudest

prondeſt, and ſtouteſt of them into deſtruction; if he breath and blow upon them in his anger, they will fall before him: 'tis not only in the power of his hands to unburden his patience of them, but he can do it very eaſily. Now to demonſtrate this a little further, I ſhall lay down the four following particulars, ſhewing what the wicked are compared to in Scripture, reſpecting the matter in hand.

Fiſt of all, they are compared to ſtubble and chaſt; and how eaſily doth the fire make waſte and havock of ſuch things, *Iſai.*

The wicked are like ſtubble.

*5. 24. Therefore as the fire devoureth the ſtubble and the flame conſumeth the chaſt, ſo their root ſhall be rottenneſs; and Nah. 1. 10. They ſhall be devoured, 'tis ſaid there, as the ſtubble fully dry: wet ſtubble is not ſo eaſily conſumed by our culinary fire as that which is dry; but 'tis all one to an Almighty God, whether it be a green tree or a dry tree; whether the ſtubble be wet or dry, this conſuming fire can eaſily burn it up; but theſe expreſſions, *They ſhall be devoured as ſtubble*, not only dry, but *fully dry*, and ſo as it were fitted and prepared for the fire, are ſuited to our low apprehenſions, to help us in the underſtanding of what is there propounded: but you muſt know that our God can with unconceivably and unſpeakably more eaſe conſume the greateſt and moſt hardened ſinner, then any fire that we can kindle, conſume the moſt prepared ſtubble.*

2. The wicked are compared to Thorns; and how eaſily doth the flaming fire conſume them?

The wicked are like Thorns.

them? *Isai. 27. 4. Who would set the Briers and Thorns against me in Battel? I would go through them and burn them together: He need not make any stop to effect the ruine of such, the least touch as he passeth by will do it; the passing of this Sea by them will burn them together: that place is very observable, Isai. 33. 12. As Thorns cut up, they shall be burnt in the fire; 'tis not said, as Thorns standing and rooted in the earth, and growing with their moisture about them; but as Thorns cut up, as dead and dry Thorns, so and more easily shall wicked men be destroyed by the Lord.*

3. This is set out by the melting of wax before the fire; and by the passing away of smoak before the wind; and how easily are both these done? *Mic. 1. 4. & Psal. 68. 2. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as the wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of the Lord: How easily doth a strong wind blow away the smoak? and how easily doth the fire melt the wax? nay, a little small fire, the flame of a Candle; but 'tis unspeakably more easie for this fire to drive before him, and melt away those that hate him.*

4. 'Tis set out by the melting of the fat of Lambs before the fire, *Psal. 37. 20. But the wicked shall perish, and the Enemies of Lord shall be as the fat of Lambs; they shall consume into smoak, they shall consume away: The fat of Lambs is very tender, and more easily melted then other*

other fat; but more easily then this doth the great God destroy the proudest of his enemies.

3. Is God consuming fire? then 'tis in vain for a sinner to think of resisting God, and making his part good against him: If the Pot-herbs of the earth will be contending, let them do it with such as are like themselves; and not with their Maker: *Isai. 45. 9.* Thorns may assoon prevail against the fire; and dry stubble save it self from burning; and wax, and the fat of Lambs, keep themselves from being melted, when they are before a great fire, yea sooner, then those that harden themselves against God. keep themselves from being destroyed by him: when his fierce wrath and hot displeasure break out, they may struggle, and strive, and do what they can to secure themselves, but 'tis all in vain and lost labour: *Isai. 47. 14.* Behold, they shall be as stubble, the fire shall devour them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame. Be the sinners of what rank and quality soever, all is one; if he do but shake his hand over them, it shall serve the turn to overthrow the greatest, *Zech. 2. 9.* If he do but hiss, it will be done, *Isai. 7. 8.* No weapon formed against God shall prosper, when he sets himself against persons, *Nahum 3. 5.* Strong holds shall be as Figge-trees with the first ripe Figges; if they be even shaken they shall fall, *Jer. 12.*

The fire, you know, destroys the weaker sort of wood, and the stronger; but it cannot so easily destroy the one as the other: but

however it be with our Kitchin-fire, all is one with God, strong, or weak; *Isai. 1. ult.* The strong shall be as Tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them: When the *Philistines* laboured by wiles to overcome *Sampson*, one thing done was this, they bound him with green withes, but he brake them, *Judg. 6.* and he did it easily, green withes are strong, yet they were easily broken; and broken as tow: *Sampson* it seems was a Type of Christ, but Christ is stronger then he: he can burn the strongest as Tow: As he can save his People by a few as well as by many; so he can destroy his Enemies, though they be never so many thousands, as well as a few: *Nah. 1. 10.* While they be folded together as *T thorns*, they shall be devoured, as stubble fully dry; though they twist and combine, and associate together, yet they be but as stubble, and stubble fully dry, and so shall be devoured by the fire of Gods wrath; and so in that place before, *Isai. 27. 4.* They that provoke God, do they not do it to the confusion of their own faces? Though hand joyn in hand, yet the wicked shall not escape the vengeance of God: as said, *Matth. 10. 28.* that God is able to destroy: Fire is that which never saith, I have enough, *Prov. 30. 16.* It will not only destroy a small heap of wood, but a house full; a Parish full, a City full, a whole Country full, if it were laid before it; and God will destroy all those great heaps and large companies in this and other Nations, who

who remain in their natural state; *Multitudes, Multitudes*, as we read, *in the Valley of Decision*. God is called, *Isai. 10. 17. The light of Israel, and the Holy One of Israel*, 'is said, *is for a flame*; and he will destroy, and burn through the Churches Adversaries, who art in that Chapter compared to a Forrest, and to a fruitful field, *vers. 18.* and so *vers. 34.*

4. Is God a consuming fire? then soon The wick-
 may such and such of his Adversaries who ex-ed may
 alt themselves against him, be consumed be- quickly
 fore him: the Scripture speaks much of the perish.
 sudden destruction of the wicked; yea, and
 also upon occasion of this, that God is fire:
Isai. 10. the latter part of the 17. verse, *His
 thorns should be burnt in one day*; there should
 be a speedy riddance, and a quick dispatch of
 them: Wait a little, and the fire shall burn up
 the glittering pomp of those that hate God.
*Eccles. 7. 6. As the crackling of thorns under
 the pot, so is the laughter of the wicked*: Thorns
 make a short hot blaze, and then away; and
 their prickles are all consumed, and the ashes
 of them may be as safely handled as the ashes
 of other wood; and so the wicked make a lit-
 tle short noise and rattling in the world, and
 then they are no more, there is an end of
 them, and where are they? their joy and plea-
 sure in sin is over; and their dead bodies may
 be as safely touched, and their graves trodden
 upon as the graves and bodies of others; you
 may come with as little danger to the carcase
 of a Lyon, as to the carcase of the meaneſt
 creature:

creature: How suddenly were some destroyed with fire! which we read of, *Numb.* 16. and the Sun shone upon *Sodom* in the morning of the day on which it was consumed with fire, *Gen.* 19. 23. *The Sun was risen upon the Earth when Lot entred into Zoar*; but it proved a hotter day then the *Sodomites* were aware of: it was a Sun-shining morning, but a rainy day; and the rain was of fire. Men now under the hot Sun-shine of prosperity, may very shortly become the fuel of the hot and devouring wrath of God: very often when men cry peace, peace, sudden destruction comes as travel upon a woman with child: The Hand-writing came forth upon the wall, when *Belshazzar* was making merry with his Lords; and the judgement therein written was executed the same night, *Dan.* 5. 30. How suddenly were some of the most mighty men, who took up the three children to cast them into the fiery furnace, how soon were they consumed in the flame! *Dan.* 3. 20, 22. A great fire quickly consumes what is thrown into it. You cannot forget the late story of the woman in *Portsmouth*, who was upon a sudden consumed almost all to ashes, before any of the familie knew it, by a fire not blown. The example is dreadful, and it should awaken all to whom the report of it cometh: She was wont often, it seems, to heat and inflame her body with Wine; & there was another burning kindled, which quickly consumed her from the face of the Earth. Let all the Inhabitants of this Nation, and others, to whom the tidings of this may come, hear and
 fear,

The wo-
 man of
Portf-
mouth.

fear, and do no more so wickedly, *Deut. 10. 11.*
 Do you think that she was a greater sinner
 then all others? *I tell you nay, and except you*
repent, you shall all likewise perish. *Luk. 13. 3.* the
 Lord can quickly kindle a fire which may de-
 stroy you also.

sly, Is God a consuming fire? then the de- The wick-
 struction of his Enemies will be irrecoverable. ed shall
 This fire will burn and burn men for ever, and perish for
 ever: We read *1 Tim. 6. 9.* How *sin* drowns men ever.
in destruction, and perdition, it plunges them into
 the ditch of destruction, over head and ears;
 and they shall be no more able to rise from it
 then men drowned in the mid stof the Sea; and
 so we read of ever lasting fire, that the ungodly
 shall be cast into, *Mat. 25.* Everlasting is a long
 word indeed; and *2 Thess. 1.* When Christ is re-
 vealed in flaming fire, they shall be punished with
 everlasting destruction: not for a month, or a
 year, nor for a thousand, nor ten thousand
 years only, but for ever, with a destruction
 that shall last so long as the Eternal God who
 is consuming fire. We read somewhere of the
 smok of torment rising up for ever and ever;
 they shall never be able to deliver themselves
 from the power of the flame, *Isai. 47. 14.*
 The fire which the Angry God will cast the
 wicked into, is other manner of fire then that
 which we make use of. This fire, when it is
 small, especially even where there is wood,
 may be extinguished; and sometimes there is
 a defect of wood, and so it goes out, *Prov.*
26. 20, but 'tis not possible for any to put
 out this fire which the breath of an angry God
 doth kindle and keep burning, *Isai. 30. ult.*

and there shall be still fuel; the wicked who shall be the fuel, shall by the miraculous power of God be so preserved and continued in their being, that however they be still burning, yet they shall be never annihilated, but be ever burning; they shall have a being, though a miserable one, and such as will be worse then no being: How frequently do we read in the Scripture of a *fire that shall never be quenched*? Mar. 9. 43. I have read of a stone in *Arcadia*, that never leaves burning when it is once a fire; however that be, those who are once cast into the place of torment, must be tormented still. *Prov. 11. 23. The expectation of the wicked is Wrath*; his expectation here, though it should be of Heaven, yet it will end in wrath: and when they are in Hell, there will be every day a further expectation of wrath; when one hundred of thousand years is over, there will be an expectation of wrath still, and when that sum of years is doubly and trebly filled up, there will be an expectation of wrath still; and after that, yet still, and still, nothing but wrath expected, more and more wrath: see *Job. 3. 16. He that believeth not in the Son, shall not see the Lord, the life, the life eternal*, before spoken of the blissful life of glory; but he that believeth not, the wrath of God *abides*, remains upon him; it hath taken up its seat and resting upon such a one; it abides and will abide, it never removes its Mansion from such a one: and *Matth. 3. we read of the wrath to come*; *μελλουσα οργη*; 'tis future still; 'tis never upon those that perish wrath past. and

and over; but always to come, to come; when never so much hath come, yet there is always more to come.

Let me use here an expression too, *Isai.* 50. 11. *Behold ye that kindle a fire, that seek by base shifts to relieve your selves, and reject God, ye shall lie down in sorrow:* Let me allude to this; those that perish shall lie down in sorrow, but they shall never rise from it again: What a terrible place is that, *Isai.* 33. 14. *Who shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who shall dwell with the everlasting burning?* It is bad dwelling in fire; yet the ungodly must not only be cast into fire, but dwell in fire too; 'tis a hot dwelling in some Countries, where the Suns heat is most scorching; but unspeakably hotter to dwell in devouring fire, and in fire that will burn still: there shall be no Goal-delivery from the prison of Hell, no release of such Prisoners; the fetters shall never be taken off from their feet, nor shall the chains by which they shall be bound in torment ever fall off; from this place there shall be no redemption.

But some will say, *Is this just with God to punish a sinner eternally?*

Answer, 1. Gods Will is the rule of Righteousness; and therefore what he doth, or shall do, must needs be righteous; he is Lord of all; he hath a sovereign right and an absolute supremacy over the creature. 'Tis just with God to punish the wicked eternally.

2. God is the judge of the World; and *shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* *Gen.* 18. 25.

3. His

3. His Justice cannot be satisfied by any punishment in time, it being Infinite Justice that is offended and provoked by sin.

But some may say, *The sins for which the sinner was destroyed were temporal; How then can he be justly punished eternally?*

I answer, He sinned as long as he could, throughout the whole time of Gods patience and long-suffering, so long as he was suffered to live in the world; and it was in his heart to go on in sin longer, if his life had been longer; though possibly some did not perceive this resolution, yet it lay close in the secret corners of the heart, which was all naked to God; if their strength and days had not been cut off, they would have proceeded on still to more and more evil; and therefore 'tis fit they should be punished so long as the Lord is God: now there will be no end of his days, *from everlasting to everlasting be it God*, Psal. 90. 2. And further, Did not they slight Infinite Mercy, and despise and tread under their foot the offer of Eternal Salvation? And therefore 'tis fit they should endure eternal sorrow and misery.

Again, They have but what they chose; such of them as lived under the Word, had life and death set before them; eternal life, and eternal death, *Deut. 11. 26, 27.* and so *Deut. 30. 15.* See, *I have set before you life and death, good and Evil*; And as this was set before the *Israelites*; so it hath been set before others to whom the Word of God is come: Lo I tell you this day, if you believe
and

and walk in the way of God, here is life: But if you believe not, and refuse his Statutes, lo here is death, evil, and a curse; one of them you must take: And which will you choose? Will you have Christ, and with him grace and glory, and every good thing? or will you have sin with the wrath and curse of God here and hereafter? Men should say, Oh let me have Christ! he shall be my King, and Priest, and Prophet; *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.* and set up thy Throne in my heart, and cast down what ever exalts it self against thy Interest and Kingdom; come and make me holy, and happy; thou art the best portion, the one thing needful, the chiefest of ten thousands, better then all the world: let me have Christ or else I perish; nothing will content and satisfie, unless Christ be mine: whatever others say, we must have Christ. But alas, so blind are the mindes of men naturally, and so corrupted are their hearts, so wedded to sin, and so mad upon their abominations, so earthly and sensual, that they say, Who will shew us any outward good? Let us have the honours, the pleasures, the riches of this world; they must have their carnal ease, the good esteem of the world, and the like; and as for Christ, they say, at least in their hearts, He is a hard Master his yoke is heavy, and his Commandements are grievous; *He reaps where he hath not sown, and gathers where he hath not sowed,* Matth. 23. 24. I will have none of his ways; and interpretatively, they do say, let him keep his

Glance, and his Heaven to himself: I will not be checkt and controlled in the way that my heart is set upon; I will not deny my self; I will not lay my house, my estate, my liberty, my Relations, my Country, my life at his feet to be disposed of by him as he shall see good: I will have my lusts whatever it cost me. This is more secretly or expressly the language of the heart of every one that rejects Christ and Salvation, and walks after the vain counsels of his own corrupt heart.

Now, if men will not have Christ, and do reject the Word, and the way of life, hate knowledge, and *will not choose the fear of the Lord*, Prov. 1. 29. *no but choose their own ways*, Isai. 66. 3. and love to wander, Jer. 2. 25. and they will do what is good in their own eyes; and though they hear that the way of sin, is the ready road to the gates of eternal death, yet they do desire it, and their hearts pant after it: Can such complain justly if they meet with everlasting destruction at their journeys end? 'Tis said, Prov. 8. ult. *He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul; all that hate me love death; they that choose and love that which leads to death, they love death.* Now, Shall sinners find fault with God, if they have what they love, and choose, and desire, and with much greediness hasten to? Let them thank themselves who have made a bad choice, as indeed they all have, who leave the ways of uprightness to walk in the ways of sin.

5. Is God a consuming fire? How wonderful and amazing then is the respite which the ungodly have? Oh that any of his enemies should be yet alive before him! Some of them are greater sinners than ordinary; indeed his long-suffering is astonishing to all, considering the desert and evil of sin; but much more as to those who corrupt their ways and their doings most. Are not the hearts of men as a fiery Oven, burning and flaming in their wickedness? Are not the words of men very stout against God? Do not they in contempt and disdain thrust away the Statutes of the Lord, hating to be reformed? And hath not God for twenty, and forty, and threescore years, yea more than fourscore in the case of some let them alone, and forbore to execute his sentence against them for their evil doing? Stay your selves, and wonder, that God whose laws they have trodden under foot is near them, and round about them, and compasseth their path; and this God is a consuming fire, and yet he doth hitherto bear and forbear with them: Oh wonderful! Was it not a strange thing which we read of *Dan. 3.* when the three Children were cast into the fire they were not burned, the very Enemies saw it and wondered: But who doth wisely observe and wonder at this, that the Enemies of God, who are as stubble and chaff, should every day strike against this fire that I am speaking of, which is another manner of fire than that, and yet are not consumed? this is more wonderful, though 'tis not so much exposed to sense as

the other was Gods, restraining the fire from burning his servants, who for his great Names sake incurred the wrath of the angry King : that the haters of God, such as would unlord the God of Heaven, and destroy his Being, if it were possible, that they should all the day and night long be so neer a great fire, and yet escape burning : Be astonished O Heaven and Earth at this.

There is no defect of power in God ; for all power doth belong to him : and there can be no want of an opportunity ; for he holdeth their breath in his hand, and may shut his hand, and keep it from them when ever he pleaseth ; and he is every where, behind, and before them, *Psal.* 139. 5. Oh the mighty power of his long-suffering ! When *David* did let *Saul* escape wth his life, when God delivered him into his hand, *Saul* said, 1 *Sam.* 24. 19. *If a man find his Enemy, will he let him go well away ?*

Saul hunted for *David*s life, but yet *David* spared his life, not daring to stretch out his hand against the Lords Anointed, & *Saul* was much affected with it; measuring *David*s frame with his own. But what is that, if any of us let an hostile Enemy go with his life, to this of Gods sparing the sinner ? God hath his Enemies at an advantage still, and he sees all their spite and rage against him ; how they violate his Law, and turn from it in heart and life ; how mercy is abused, and how judgements are slighted and disregarded ; how froward and perverse they are in their way, and lift up their

their heels against him: He sees the wickedness and mischiefs they work in their souls; and not a word in their tongue, nor an outward deed in their whole conversation; but he knows it altogether with all the heightening and aggravating circumstances, and yet he doth not take vengeance: Stand still O sinner, and wonder that thou art out of Hell! and know, that patience wounded and provoked ends at length in very hot fury. There be bounds and limits set in Gods everlasting Council, beyond which he will bear no longer. He was grieved forty years with a stiff-necked people in the Wilderness, and so *swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest*, Heb. 3. 10, 11.

6. Is God a consuming fire? then see one reason among many, why the ungodly are in Scripture called fools, *Prov. 13. 19. 'Tis an abomination to fools to depart from evil*; *Prov. 10. 23. 'Tis a sport to a fool to do mischief*: They well deserve the name, who are all the day long displeasing God, and putting themselves into the hands of his destroying Justice: Who but a fool, or madman, would put himself into the fire to be burned? and so in a spiritual sense, What fools be they who cast themselves upon the fire, this devouring fire? and yet so they do, who make war with Heaven, and set themselves against the Lord by a course of rebellion and disobedience to his holy Laws: Will they get any thing who strike against the fire? their end is sure to be burned, if they hold on in their folly and madness still.

The wicked well deserve the name of fools.

We

We have seen some flies now and then buzz about a Candle, and flashing with their thin and tender wings about it, and over it, when it hath been burning, and at length they are burned for their labour; they escape it may be once or twice, or oftner; but after a while they lay down their lives there: What foolish creatures do we judge these? Ah foolish fly some will say: But behold, greater folly then this every day in impenitent sinners; they buzz about the fire, all the while they are tampering with sin and pursuing the desires of the flesh; they are flashing about, and striking against the fire: escape it may be once, and again, yea many days and years it may be some of them; and this doth harden and embolden them, and they will try again, and play about the fire once more; and possibly before they are quite consumed, God doth let out a little of his wrath into their Consciences, and vexeth and tormenteth them, they are something singed and scorched. But how many be there, who like the foolish Flies, after their wings are singed, yet will not take warning till they be utterly consumed! Ah that ever reasonable creatures should so degrade and disparage themselves, as to yield up themselves servants to a base lust, and so endanger a burning! Ah foolish people and unwise! Can the sparkling Wine in the cup, or thy Strong drink which thou takest in excess, make amends for thy soul? *Prov. 23. 32. At last these will bite like a Serpent, and sting like*

an Adder. Can thy riot, and wantonness, thy revellings and thy banquettings recompence thee for the endless sorrow thou art like to come under? Can thy idle hours, thy merry words, thy back-biting and slandering; thy magnifying thy self against the people of the most High; thy unjust gain, the thick clay that thou dost lade thy self with, make thee satisfaction for the torment threatned, and to be inflicted upon the wicked? *What would it advantage thee to gain the whole world and lose thy own soul?* Matth. 16. 26. Was it not folly in Esau as well as prophane, to sell his Birthright for a mess of Pottage? And would it not be folly also in thee to sell thy self for things that cannot profit; to grasp a shadow, and let go the substance; for things that be not meat and drink for thy soul, to lose the favour of God, and to draw on upon thee the burden of his fiery wrath! Oh consider it before it be too late.

7. See how unmerciful and cruel Gossips are; they may talk of mercy, but they are the most uncharitable and cruel persons that be.

First of all, they are without pity and compassion to their own souls: they say, it may be, to others, Spare your selves, when they are about some costly and flesh-displeasing and self-denying work, and so endeavour to take them off from that which they should encourage and strengthen their hands all that they can in, *Matth. 16. 22, 23.* But alas poor creatures, they will not spare

spare themselves, ¹⁰ not spare their own
 souls in the things which they should spare
 themselves in; but rush into sin as the Horse
 into battle, and rub themselves by wicked-
 ness upon the wrath of God which is hor-
 rer then fire, and so wrong and injure their
 own souls: those that provoked God, and
 were burned, *Numb. 16 38.* are called *sin-
 ners against their own souls*: and see *Prov.*
8. 32. a place mentioned before upon ano-
 ther occasion, *They that sin against God wrong
 their own souls*: *Psal. 71. 4.* Unrighteous and
 cruel men are put together. Is this mercy
 to spare the body and kill the soul? Let
 things be called after their own names.
 Would you say such a one is a merciful man,
 if he should cut off his own arm and throw
 it into the fire? the ungodly do the like, or
 worse; every day thou dost cast not thy arm
 only, but thy body and soul upon a greater
 fire: You run Swords, as it were, into your
 selves by adventuring upon sin; you shoot
 poysoned Arrows into your own hearts; you
 drink down poyson, and much of it, by
 drinking iniquity like water, *Job 15. 16.* and
 by this means they are in danger of drink-
 ing the wrath of the Almighty, *Job 21. 20.*
 they thrust, as it were, such mortal stings in
 their own sides as are like to sting them to
 eternal death; see *Prov. 11. 17.* *The merciful
 man doth good to his own soul, but he that is
 cruel troubleth his own flesh*: every impenitent
 person is cruel and troubleth his own flesh;
 he doth that which is like to be a trouble and
 vexation to him for ever,

2. Their

2. Their cruelty doth also appear in strengthening and encouraging others in wayes of sin. Would you not count him cruel who should make a fire, and throw his Wife, or Child, or Servant, or any other into it? But this is worse, to put any upon sin, to provoke or allure any to join or take part with themselves or others in Evil; this is to cast them (what in you lies) into the fire, into Hell-fire: Thou art a cruel Parent, and a cruel Master, who dost put thy Child or Servant upon sin; this is to cast them (what thou canst) into the fire: Thou art upon the same account a bloody Husband, who dost put thy Wife upon sin; and a cruel Wife who dost offer any forbidden fruit to thy Husband to eat of it. And so we may say of others, Thou art a cruel and bloody Minister who dost not give warning to the people of the danger they are in by reason of sin, who dost daub with untempered Mortar, crying Peace where is no Peace; who dost prophesie false things, who saist to such who make a Trade of sin, Go on and prosper; who dost sadden the righteous, and encourage the wicked; who dost love those that hate God, and hate those that love God. Oh thou cruel and unmerciful Neighbour, who dost propagate thy wickedness, and saist to others, when thou art fulfilling the desires of the flesh, *Cast in thy lot among us, Prov. 1. 14.* Are you not content to perish alone? Must you draw company along with you to the pit of destruction? Care you not how many throw themselves upon devouring fire? That may aggravate, but it cannot lessen thy condemnation. Oh where will men

who are great pretenders to Love and Charity, I am to shew Mercy! That is the best and truest Love and Compassion, which is exercised towards poor Souls, to hinder them what we can from coming under the wrath of God, who is consuming fire. I may urge something about this in its due place.

8. Is God a consuming fire? Then 'tis a fearful thing to fall into his hands, *Heb. 10. 31. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*: 'Tis a very terrible Scripture, and that you may the better understand it, consider it in its dependance; in the verse before, you have these words, *For we know him that said, Vengeance belongeth to me, I will recompence, saith the Lord*; and again, *The Lord shall judge his people*. Vengeance belongeth to God, he challengeth it as his Prerogative Royal; to him alone it appertaineth; 'tis the proper Work and Office of God to take vengeance upon the wicked; he will not let the contempt of his glorious and blessed Majesty to go unpunished, because he is a just and righteous Judge, and challengeth to himself the Priviledge and Right of Executing Vengeance; and that being propounded, it follows, *'tis a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God*: 'Tis unspeakably worse to fall into the revenging hands of God, than into the hands of Man, whose power reaches onely over the outward, fleshly part, and that being mortal, as well as the Instrument of Vengeance, can be but a little while, in comparison, afflicted and distressed by him: But the Lord's Power is greater, and he is an ever-living God; and yet 'tis in
great

great Wrath that some would be ready to punish Prov. 10.
 some, especially if it were in the power of their hands, *Psal. 7. 21 O Lord my God, save me from them that persecute me, and deliver me, lest he tear my soul like a Lyon, renting is in pieces while there is none to deliver.* But the unrighteous Vengeance of the most enraged and cruel Persecutor, is nothing with respect to the pain of sense, unto the just and righteous Vengeance of the Holy God.

But you will say, How doth this agree with that passage of *David, 2 Sam. 24. 14.* wh re having three things propounded to him, he said unto God, *I am in a great strait; Let us fall now into the hands of the Lord, for his Mercies are great; but let me not fall into the hands of men.*

The Answer of this will be easie, if we consider who *David* was, and what Experience he had of God's Goodness and Mercy; he was such a one of whom the Lord himself said, *I have found David a man after my own heart.* He was a person reconciled to God, highly honored and favoured by him, one who had tasted how gracious he was, and was able to tell a large story of what the Lord had done to his soul; he was a man to whom God had made a Covenant ordered in all things, and sure; the loving-kindness of God was engaged to him by a promise that could not fail. Now *David* hoping in Gods Word, and trusting in his Mercy, chuses rather (as he had good reason to do) to have the gracious God, his Covenant-God for his Judge, than cruel and unmerciful men; he had rather be afflicted immediately by his head, than to be sold

for any time into the hands of his Adversaries: He knew God was more easie to be entreated by him, and that in the midst of Judgments he would remember Mercy. And besides,

247, The falling into the hands of God spoken of there, was meerly with respect to some outward punishment in this life: 'tis better to bear and endure the most exquisite torments that the most subtil and bloody Enemies can devise and find out, though it were all our life-time, better unconceivably, than to endure the wrath of God hereafter.

But now 247, You must know there is a great deal of difference among persons; and a great deal of difference of punishments here and hereafter. As for the godly, there remaineth to them a Rest after the troublesome time which they pass over here in the flesh; their best things are reserved for the World to come; and the afflictions which God doth lay upon their loins here, are in love: God's anger to them is Fatherly, and such as is rooted in love; but now to such as perish, their afflictions even here, whether by the hand of God immediately, or by others, are fruits and effects of his Vindictive Justice; the Curse of God goes along with all their bodily pains and aches, and with all their pressures and distresses, but the worst part is reserved for the other World; all their good things are here, and the sharpest and most bitter things are to come: How insensible and unapprehensive secret they are of it, their estate, even here, is very sad, whether it be of Prosperity or Adversity, both the one and the other, through Satan's

Satan's Malice, and the corrupt poysonful disposition of their own hearts, work together for their hurt; but now 'tis with respect to the wrath to come, and the punishments reserved for such after death, that I say from that Scripture, that 'tis a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Think upon this, God is variously described in the Scripture, according to the persons spoken of; some he loves in Jesus Christ, and remembers them with special Mercy; others he abhors, and threatens to deal with them in a way of righteous Vengeance: see *Psal. 18. 26. With the pure thou wilt shew thy self pure; and with the froward he will shew himself froward*; he will pay the froward (as it were) in a sort after their own coin; they be contrary to him, and he will walk contrary to them; he layeth up their iniquity, and he will reward them, and they shall know it; sense and experience after a little space will make men to their sorrow say, That 'tis a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, 'Tis dreadful to fall here into fire; but it will be more dreadful to fall into everlasting burnings.

I shall endeavour a little to represent the terribleness of it, in these two or three following particulars; 'tis not much that I shall speak; but how much soever should be said of it, it cannot be set out sufficiently, but it must needs be very terrible.

First of all, Because of his Greatness and Power; his Greatness is unsearchable, and his Power is infinite; there be no bounds and li-

mits of it ; and as God is great , so is his fiery Wrath and Indignation ; 'tis a great Wrath , and an infinite Indignation : *Z. ba* and *Zalmanna* said to *Gibeon*, *As the man is, so is his strength* : I only allude to that , As the Lord is , so is his strength ; of his strength and power there is no end, his Arm is too long to be measured, it is never shortned to save, *Isa.* 59. 21. and 'tis never shortned to destroy ; if he say the word, it shall be done ; if he speak, it shall come to pass ; his Almightiness is engaged to help his people , and to avenge himself on the Enemies of his Truth. An Earthly Kings Wrath is compared to the roaring of a Lyon ; how fearful then is the Wrath of the King of kings, and of the Lord of lords ? A Lyon is a strong Creature, the Beasts do tremble when it roareth : Oh what awfulness should there be to consider of the Voice, and that of the mighty Voice of God speaking in his Word, *Psal.* 90. 11. *Who knows the power or the strength of thy Wrath ?*

2. Let this be considered, That no Supplications or entreaties can prevail in the Day of Wrath , to turn away the fierce Anger of the Lord. Now God doth beseech and entreat men to Turn and Live ; We are Embassadors in his Name, we come and treat with you , as though God did beseech by us ; we pray you in Christ's stead be reconciled to God, *2 Cor.* 5. 20. Grace and Salvation comes now with bended knees, wooing and entreating men to accept of it, that they may be happy ; but sinners now like the deaf Adder, stop their Ears, and will not hear ; and hereafter though they should cry never so long,

long, Mercy Lord, open the door of glory to me, God will not hear, *Prov. 1. 28.* He stood and knocked at their hearts, and they would not open to let Christ in to reign, and to sup with them; and now he will not admit such to immediate Communion with himself in Heaven; They would have none of me, may God say, and I will have none of them.

3dly, There shall not be any mixture in the Cup of Wrath, which God shall make such as perish to drink of; then is the time for Judgment without mercy: See *Revel. 14. 10.* *The same shall drink of the Wine of the Wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the Cup of his Indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy Angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.* What shall there be no mercy at all for the sinner? That is heavy News indeed. I answer, As heavy it is, the sinner must bear it; 'tis the fruit of his own setting; he did eat sowre Grapes, and now his teeth must still be set on edge, think of it what you will; not a drop of Mercy, not one crumb of Comfort will be the portion of such as perish; their life-time was filled up with sin, and their Eternity-time shall be filled up with torment; Who shall be able to endure when God shall in fire plead his Cause with perverse and froward sinners? I shall in God's Name propound and demand an Answer to this one Question, which thou mayest find *Nahum 1. 6.* *Who can stand before his Indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, who can stand before it?*

Ask thy Conscience what it hath to say thereunto ; study and consider it well , and return a mild and calm Answer unto it ; by that time thou hast well pondered this Scripture , and art able to return a right Answer , thou wilt acknowledge what I before said , *That it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

But now here some may say , If God be so terrible as you have spoken , then what is the reason that such a great number to whom the tydings of this is come , are so stupid and blockish under the discovery ? This is very well worth our narrow and diligent enquiry , and it will greatly concern such as are in a state of sin , and yet fearless hitherto of God's Wrath , to consider what may be said , and upon a sight of their sin and danger , to betake themselves to the course prescribed , in order to the securing of themselves from the destruction threatned.

The plain truth is , many speak and act as if there were no such Name and Title of God in the Scripture , as this of consuming fire , and though there be , as if it signified nothing with respect to them ; how corrupt , and how many abominable works soever they do , their faces are covered with laughter , they spend their dayes in pleasure , and bless themselves in their hearts , saying , *They shall have peace , though they walk in the imagination of their hearts , to add one evil to another :* Though some of the ungodly , who yet hold fast their iniquity , and will not let it go , have a great deal of perplexity and trouble upon their spirits , when they look back upon their ways , and think what the issue and end of all is like .

Deut. 29
19.

like to be; yet there be others of them who have none, or scarce any stop or interruption in the course of their carnal mirth and jollity, but with much pleasure and delight cater and provide for the satisfaction of the flesh, and give way to their own corrupt hearts, by proceeding from evil to evil, and therein sing a song of Rest and Happiness to their Souls, as if to loosen the Reins to Licentiousness, and to commit iniquity with greediness, were as safe and choosable a course as any. And there be several grounds of this which may be assigned :

As, First of all, it may be from the deep ~~se-~~ ^{stupidity} and benumbedness of Conscience which they are under : Conscience which should be a faithful Monitor to the Soul, and be as a Watch-man to give warning of the danger that is coming, if it be dead asleep, without feeling, if its eye be shut and closed up, if that were never awake, no wonder that a great spiritual Lethargy, and a heavy slumber of carnal Secularity hath surpris'd and weigh'd down the Soul; no wonder that the foolish sinner can sleep on the top of a Mast, though it be ready to fall into the Sea of Gods wrath, *Prov. 23. 24.* no wonder that it can lye snugging and snorting, and take such a quiet nap in sin and Satans lap, and not perceive the fire that hath burned down a great many others already, and at his door even almost ready to enter in, and destroy him also, *Jonah 1.* we read of a mighty Tempest, and how the Sea was mighty boisterous, so that the Mariners were afraid, and cryed out; but all this while *Jonah* being gone aside, and fallen asleep, he
was

was not aware of the danger the Ship and all were in: And *Judg. 4. 21.* when *Sisera* was asleep, he was not apprehensive of the danger he was in, when *Jael* came with Hammer and Nail to smite into his Temple, and so bowed down at the feet of a woman, and gave up the Ghost; if he had been awake, he would have made resistance, and escaped ('tis like) for that time with his life. So the ungodly, if their eyes were open, and their Consciences rowled up, and awakened, so that they did see the Hammer and Nail in God's hand, the fiery coals of his displeasure, then 'tis like they would cry out as those convinced persons *Acts 2. 37.* *Men and Brethren, what shall we do?* But being asleep, and not beholding the flaming and glittering Sword of Vengeance which God hath whet and made ready to execute his hot wrath, *Deut. 32. 41.* I do not wonder that we hear no bemoanings and complaints of the misery of their condition. But sinner, shall the whole time of thy life be a sleeping-time? VVilt thou turn all thy days into night? Is it not high time to arise, and awake, and shake off thy spiritual slumber and security? if this nap do last a while longer, thou wilt awake, but it will be with the flames of fire about thy ears; but then the season of repenting and returning is over.

2. Many are stupid and senseless of their danger, because wrath is reserved, and not presently inflicted; and further, because they put the evil day afar off from them. *Eccles. 8. 11.* *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the Sons of men is falsely*
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ly set in them to do evil. Men are so pur-blind, and so bleer-eyed, that they cannot see a Fire at a distance, only what is present doth affect them; a Lyon or a Bear at some distance, do not affrighten; the sound and Alarm of VVar doth not move, so long as the Sword is not sheathed in their bowels, nor the deadly Arrow thrust into their ribs, they count it well enough: The rich fool promising himself goods, and the use of them here for many years, said, *Soul, take thy ease, eat, and drink, and be merry,* Luk. 12. 19. which is almost like the language of some now, Let us sing all sorrow and care away. And *Amos* 6. 3. we read of those who did put far off the threatned Calamity, that they did cause the seat of violence to draw near, and they were at ease in *Zion*, and they did stretch themselves upon their Couches, and chaunt to the sound of the Viol, and drink wine abundantly, and were not grieved for the afflictions of *Joseph*. The *Jews* were very blockish and sottishly secure in their way of sin, and no wonder, for they said, The dayes are prolonged, *Ezek.* 12. 22, 27. the vision is for many dayes, and he prophesieth of the times afar off; but the evil day hath been near, when men have said it was afar off. See v. 25, 28. it was very near to the rich men before, that night, in which he talked of a great many years; and see *1 Thess.* 5. 3. *For when they shall say, Peace and Safety, when sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travel upon women with child, and they shall not escape; and the day of Calamity doth overtake many as a thief,*

3. 'Tis because of unbelief that men are so stupid and insensible, they do not credit our report to them from the Lord, about his destroying wrath; *Isa. 53. 1.* when Ministers have spent themselves in their labour and travel with men about their souls, this is the voice and language of the secure *Atheist* still, *Psal. 20. 6. I shall not be moved, I shall never be in adversity;* and *v. 13. The Lord will not require it:* The threatenings which your mouth is so full of, are such angry words as will break no bones; threatned men live longest, and escape best many times; the proud *Jews* when they were crossed in their desire, as to the business which they spake to *Jeremiah* about, they told him plainly, that he did speak falsely, the Lord had not sent him to say to them, *Go not into Egypt, to sojourn there;* they had said before, they would go in the way which God should shew them; but having set their hearts to go to *Egypt*, the Prophet who brought a true Answer from God, must pass for a lyar among them, *Jer. 43. 2.* and see *Jer. 5. 11, 12. The house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith the Lord, they have belied the Lord, and said, it is not he, neither shall evil come upon us.* Many will believe no more than they see. I have heard a person who had lived above threescore years, and been under the preaching of multitudes of rousing and awakening Sermons, to say vvhhen he vvas reprov'd for sin, and exhorted to make provision for another vvorld, *That he knew what was here, but he did not know what would be after this life; and if he had his youthful strength, he would follow his youth-*

youthful vanity : Unbelief is a secret, deep, inward sin, not so open to the view and observation of men, as many other sins; and is the root and ground of mens heart-insensibleness, and life-vvickedness, though ordinarily there be much spoken in the word to confute it, & much done in the vvay of Gods Providence vvhich may be useful that vvay, yet men vvill neither see, neither believe to this day : *Psal.* 78. 31, 32. *Deut.* 1. 32. Many vvho pretend much to believers, are rank Atheists to this day; 'tis said of *Noah* being vvarned about a flood, moved vvith fear, prepared an Ark; but men novv have vvarning and vvarning about a deluge of vvrrath, and they say no such thing shall come upon them, and so prepare not against drovvning therein.

4thly, Many persvvade themselves they shall be able to bear Gods vvrrath vvell enough; that 'tis no such matter to endure the burning; the thoughts and apprehensions of many are very slight about it, and their expressions savour of much contempt and disregard, even of his hottest displeasure : Some have said, *If I must perish, I must perish*; yet in the mean time I will have my pleasures and delights, saith one; and I will keep my unjust gain, saith another; *I am not willing to vex and torment my self before the time, or to that purpose*; *We will spend our dayes here in this world as merrily as we can*: *If the things spoken of, should come upon us, we shall fare no worse than others, and we must bear it as well as we can*: They think that Gods Anger is not so dreadful, nor Hell fire so hot, nor the Devil so black, as many conceive them to be: But
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oh deluded Wretches ! how long will you provoke God ! and how long will it be before you believe him ? The Mountains quake before him, and the little Hills melt at his presence ; the burden of God's Wrath is heavier than thou art aware of ; it will press and weigh thee down , so that thou wilt never be able to rise ; it will crack thy very heart, and bruise thy bones , if thou come under it, and fill thee with sore anguish for ever.

5thly, Many have their hearts fat, and are exceeding senseless of the danger their souls are in, by occasion of the constant and uninterrupted course of their prosperity, *Psal.* 17. where the Psalmist prays to be kept from the wicked that did oppress him ; and he saith , They are enclosed in their own fat, and were as cruel as Lyons ; and afterwards he saith of them, they have their portion in this life, and their belly was filled with God's hid Treasure, *Psal.* 17. 9, 10, 14. and *Psal.* 5. 6, 8, 9. *They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like others ; therefore pride compasseth them, they are corrupt, they set their mouths against Heaven ;* and so ver. 11, 12. they say, *Doth God know ?* These are the ungodly that prosper. The sweetness of the creature (through the corruption of the heart) do occasion very much benumbedness and stupifaction to the Spirits of men, *Isa.* 28. 9, 10. compared with what goes before ; and so *Isa.* 56. 12. they were very blockish , having accustomed themselves to an excessive use of the creature, and promised themselves an undisturbed continuance of these things ; Wine and strong drink had taken

taken away their hearts : I might here by the way shew, how an immoderate use of creature-comforts (though it may be sickness and some other trouble hath made some breach in this matter) tends very much to the stupifaction of mens spirits.

If men use to be over-charged with the Creature, by Riot or Drunkenness, this is like to render their hearts very blockish and stupid as to everlasting concerns, and regardless of Gods Word, and of Gods Providences ; but I am speaking now of constant course of prosperity, how that is abused by men to the hardning of their hearts against God, *Jer. 48. 11. Moab hath been at ease from his youth; and what follows? and he hath settled on his lees: This was the bad use Moab made of the outward Blessings of God; and it follows, he hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, therefore his taste remained in him:* The Antichristian Whore is threatned to have her flesh burnt with fire, *Rev. 17. 16.* yet because of her great prosperity, she is as secure as if the Lord had spoken never an angry word against her, *Rev. 18. 7. I sit as a Queen, and am no Widow, and shall see no sorrow.* And see *Psal. 55. 19. Because they have no changes, they fear not God.* Many have had great changes, have had their great prosperity, changed to great adversity, and yet do not fear God; they have been emptied from vessel to vessel, yet do not fear God to this day; according to what is mentioned, *Isa. 20. 10. Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness; in the Land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, and will*

will not behold the Majesty of the Lord : But this is the case of others , Because God doth not change their Prosperity into Adversity , their Health into Sickness , their Liberty into Bondage , therefore they do not fear God : What misconstructions to their own hardning in sin , do many make of Prosperity ? if God cast their lots into a place flowing with Milk and Honey , they are apt to say , This is *Canaan* , and they are children of the Promise : If God shine upon their Tabernacles , and give them of the fatness of the Earth , and of the dew of Heaven , and give them changes of Raiment , they are apt to say , It is unreasonable to think that he will trample them under foot , and make them Buts of his Vengeance and hot Displeasure : But we read of the rich man , that he dyed , and was in Hell . And see *Psal.* 73. 18, 19, 20, 27 .

6thly , The stupidity and insensibleness of many , is from their gross ignorance of the condition of man by nature , by reason of the guilt of Original Sin , and the universal spreading pollution and defilement of their nature , and from their deep ignorance of the extent , and exactness , and obligation of God's Law , with respect to the inward man , as well as the outward man ; and so from their great ignorance of the Necessity of Renovation of their Understandings , Hearts , Consciences , Will and Affections , *2 Cor.* 7. 17. *John* 3. 3. These things I put together , being willing to hasten to some other thing .

7thly , A great occasion hereof also , is the loose Doctrine , and the scandalous Life of many Ministers ,

Ministers, *Jer. 5. 31.* People love to have this so; yet their poor Souls are wonderfully hardned and encouraged in wayes of sin by occasion of it: The evil conversation of such as are Teachers of others, doth build up the Tower of sin more than any of the Truths they discover, do beat it down; this doth make the Unbelief and Atheism of men to take a deeper and deeper rooting in the heart of men: Oh when shall the reproach in this matter be rowled off from our Calling? when shall this kind of stumbling-block be removed, against which many do fall and perish? When shall the Watchmen of Souls awaken themselves, and keep their own eyes open, that so they may the better descry; and with seriousness and compassion give warning to the people of the danger that is coming towards them? *Blessed is that servant whom the Lord when he comes shall find so doing;* labouring hard in his Calling, and from right Principles endeavouring to save himself, and them that hear them; but what shall become of that Servant who hides up his Talent in a Napkin, and thinks every Sermon too much, and begins to eat and drink with the drunken, and to smite his fellow-servants; the Lord of that Servant shall come in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him off, and appoint his portion with hypocrites, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, *Matth. 24.* three last verses. My Brethren, we tell the people, That God is a consuming fire, let us preach the same Doctrine to our own Souls,

and charge them to make peace with him, that we may escape the evils which shall come upon the disobedient : What will it advantage us to preach to others , if we should be cast-aways ? To say we have prophesied in Christs Name, if we be found workers of iniquity ? This consuming fire will burn hotter against such of us as perish, than against most of others that perish too. I do not intend this to reproach you , but to admonish you as Brethren : Do not any way cause the people to err, neither by Conversation nor by Doctrine : 'Tis spoken of some Prophets, *Lam.* 2. 14. that they saw vain things, and did not discover the peoples iniquity : Let not us give the Lord cause to make the same Complaint against us ; let God's Command to Faithfulness and Diligence, provoke you ; and let his Promises to his faithful Ministers encourage you ; a good Prophets Reward will be great. Let us Preach down Sin, and Live down Sin : If men will harden themselves in sin, let there not be so much as any occasion given by our Doctrine, or by our Conversation,

Lastly, The stupidity of many is much strengthened by their abuse and misunderstanding of what the Scripture speaks of Gods Mercy, and Christs Merits, and from the ignorance of the true nature of Faith and Repentance ; they have very low and slight thoughts of these great and substantial matters of Religion : But, another place may afford an opportunity of speaking further about this. And so much shall suffice to have been

been spoken in answer to the former Enquiry.

But something further yet, by way of Information.

Is God a consuming fire, so terrible in his Wrath and Justice as hath been discovered? then how rich and wonderful is the Grace of God in appointing and giving his Son to be a Surety for his people, to stand in their room and stead, to bear the burden of his Wrath, to obey his Law, and to lay down his Life a Ransome, that he might deliver such as come to God by him, from this sore and terrible Vengeance?

And so how great and amazing is the Love of the Son, in undertaking the Work of mens Redemption, in humbling himself to be made a curse, to endure the burning heat in his soul of God's hot displeasure, to dye the shameful and painful death of the Cross, that he might bring many Sons to Glory?

And so how great and astonishing is the Love of the Spirit, in bearing and forbearing, in striving and treating with man about the Concernments of his Soul, in Calling, and Inviting, and Entreating them to come to Christ that they might live; in perswading, and by a powerful work of Grace, overcoming, and determining, and inclining, and making any sinners able and willing to accept of Christ and Salvation upon the Terms on which he is offered: Let these things affect your hearts, here is matter of praise, and thanksgiving, and holy admiration to all Eternity.

I confels, that the most of those who are called by the Word, notwithstanding the Obedience, Death and Satisfaction of Christ, will be consumed and devoured with the scorching fire of God's Wrath, *Matth. 7. 13, 14.* Though we read in *Matth 22.* of but one man without the Wedding-garment, who was to be bound hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness; yet that man was an Emblem of great multitudes; for it follows in the next verse, *Many are called, but few are chosen, Matth. 13. 11, 12, 13, 14.* Few are chosen, though many are called, and the Election shall obtain, though the rest are hardened and perish.

But now I pray consider, if it had not been for Christ, this consuming fire had burnt down to Hell all the Sons and Daughters of Adam; the first Rebels against the King of Glory, and all their Seed and Off-spring: But through Mercy there is a new Covenant, of which Jesus Christ is the Mediator, and a new and living way of coming to God thorough the Vail of his flesh. *There is something that I can tell you that is worthy of all acceptation, That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, 1 Tim. 1. 15.* He that is the Lord from Heaven, heavenly, stept in between sinners, who are as dry stubble, and this consuming fire, and hath quenched the revenging and destroying flame, as to all those that do believe. *Psal 110. last,* it was prophesied of him, That he should drink of the Brook in the way, and so lift up the Head; and both parts

parts are long since accomplished ; the *Brook* is to be understood of the *Brook* of God's Wrath ; and the latter part is to be understood of the Exaltation following upon Christ's Humiliation : Christ hath so drunk up the Brook of God's Wrath , that not so much as one drop of God's revenging fury shall be poured out upon the godly. But this may be spoken to in another place. If such of us as have found especial favour with God, had been cast into this Brook, we should have been drowned and swallowed up utterly.

But so wonderfully hath God commended his Love , so tender, so superlatively tender were the bowels of his Compassion towards poor perishing ones, that he sent his Son into the World, and delivered him for his people, *John* 3. 16. and *Rom*, 5. 8. And herein we perceive the Love of Christ , that he hath laid down his life for such , *1 John* 3. 16. This is one of the Names by which Christ is known in the Church , *Rev.* 1. 5. *He that loved us, and washed away our sins in his blood :* Oh the height of this Love ! Who can reach the top of it ? Oh the depth of this Love ! 'tis impossible to fathome it : Oh the breadth of it ! it cannot be comprehended : Here be such Clusters of Grace , such great Bunches of Favour , that we are not able to grasp them : There be many high Discoveries and Demonstrations of Love in the Scripture, that of *Abraham* to *Isaac*, the Son of the Promise, that of *Jonathan* to *David* ; but they come all un-

speakingly short of this: What is *Isaac* and *David*, to Christ, *David's* and *Abraham's* Lord? *Psal.* 110. 1. When we begin to walk in our Contemplations in this pleasant and large Field, the feet of the Soul through Divine Grace, sometimes travel far in a short space. It were easie to expatiate in this matter.

Ah! this Love is the Rise and Spring of all true happiness and joy; there had been no Pardon, no Peace, no Sanctifying Grace, no Communion with God, no good Hope of Glory; the Curse of the Law, and the Wrath of God, would have been our Eternal Portion: We had never been able our selves to quench the least spark of this Fire, much less the large and ever-flowing burning streams of it: And therefore God out of his abundant love called forth his Son to do the work for such of us as do, or shall believe in him: *Psal.* 40. 7. *Then said I, Lo I come, in the Volume of the Book it is written of me.* This is an answer to a Call, Come, undertake for poor sinners, (we may apprehend the Father speaking thus to his Son) they will perish else, and be undone for ever; and therefore come, stand between me and the sinner, satisfy my provoked Justice, quench the Fire that would destroy them else: *Lo I come* (saith he) *I will do all that is needful, for the payment of their Debts; thy Justice shall not be a penny looser by remitting them: I am content for their sakes whom thou hast given me, to be despised, and afflicted, and rejected of men, to bear their griefs*
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and their sorrows, to be wounded and bruised by the strokes of thy Wrath: I will drink the forest dregs of it, rather than they shall perish: Lay upon me what thy Justice doth demand and require from them.

What Grace and Love is here! Much may be said to set this out: as, First of all, That it is free and undeserved; We are less than the least of all God's Mercies, not worthy of one drop of water to cool the tongue; and we are worthy of the greatest Miseries; by Nature all the World stands guilty before God, *Rom.* 3. 19. or subject to his Judgment, as it is in the Margent; 'tis of his Mercy that we are not consum'd, *Lament.* 3. 12. not onely that we are not consumed with a temporal destruction, but also, that we are not consumed with an eternal destruction: We might have been overthrown as *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*; God might have revealed his Wrath in fire against us; we were under the very same condemnation with others: Oh that any of those who were by nature children of wrath, should escape! That he should pluck such of us who now believe, as brands out of the fire! That he should say concerning us, as we find *Zach.* 2. 2. concerning *Jehoshua*, Is not this a brand pluckt out of the fire? Let such then who glory, glory in the Lord, who hath done it in rich Grace, and all to the praise and glory of his Free-Grace, *Eph.* 1. 6.

2dly, What Christ hath done to appease God's wrath, was unsought for by the sinner: I mean, the first news and tydings of it, was

from a discovery and manifestation of it, made by the God of Mercy and Salvation; God promised to send his Son, before men did ever think of such a way of Redemption, as by the Eternal and onely begotten Son of God, or before we did put up the least Request and Petition about such a thing, *Gen. 3. 15.* If God had not discovered his Design of Love, it cannot rationally be conceived that ever a thought of such a thing, should have entered into the heart of man: Who could have unriddled that deep and profound saying, *Gen. 2. 17.* the latter part, without God's own Commentary? Who could have secured us, that the fearful threatening there, had any exception? that there was a Blessing in the bowels of that curse, unless the Lord in his Word had declared so? Sure there is admirable Wisdom in this contrivance of God, for the sinners recovery, and here is an admirable temperament of Justice and Mercy! The very Angels pry into it, and wonder at it, *Great is the mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh, 1 Tim. 3. 8.* How should we cry out, Our Soul is too narrow, our thoughts are too straitened for such a Meditation?

3dly, 'Tis distinguishing Mercy, even the Revelation of it is not common to all the World; it was heretofore hid from ages, and from generations, *Col. 1. 26.* and even now 'tis a Myserie hidden from many Nations; how many thousands be there who never heard any thing of the way to Immortality and Life, which is brought to light by the Gospel;

spel, of Salvation to be had by the death and obedience of one who is God and Man in one person : The poor *Jews* are ignorant of this way of Righteousness, and there be many who are Worshipers of Devils, who sit to this day in darkness, and in the shadow of death, are without God, without Christ in the World ; and what dust-heaps of men and women be there among our selves, who do only hear, and talk of Christ, and with the mouth profess subjection to him, who believe not in the heart, and to whom Christ is of none effect, as to any saving-benefit and advantage, how much soever he hath done and suffered ? That God should pass by some in the same House, of the same Family, of the same Calling and Profession, yea, the most of others, and command his special loving-kindness to fasten upon us, what a wonder of Grace and Mercy is here ! And this is a distinguishing, with respect to all the Apostate Angels, they are fallen, and such never rise, but suffer the vengeance of Eternal Fire, *Jude* ver. 6.

Further, Is God a consuming Fire ? Then see here the Mischievous and Poysonful Nature of sin : When *David* was blamed by *Eliab* for coming into *Saul's* Camp, he answered, *Is there not a cause ?* So if any find fault with God, or enquire why he should speak such hard words as he doth, against his Creatures, and look so terribly upon them ? I may answer, There is cause enough, the righteous God cannot do wrong, all his ways are judgment,

ment, he is a God of Truth, and without iniquity, *Deut. 32. 4.* We read *Exod. 32.* how the Wrath of God waxed hot against the Prophets; *They were not estranged from their lust, and then the wrath of God came upon them, Ps. 78. 30, 31. and Ezek. 19. 20. Because ye are all become dross, therefore will I gather you as they gather Lead and Tin into the midst of the Furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it.* The Justice of an infinite God, is provoked by sin; Oh! sin is the procuring and deserving-cause of all; there is an evil beyond what the largest created understanding can conceive. In Time Divine Justice cannot have satisfaction by a meer Creature for the wrong done it by sin; and that is a reason why the Torments inflicted upon the Damned, must rest upon them for ever. God would not cast the wicked into everlasting fire, if sin were not such a horrible evil as to deserve it: This hath brought in the Hostility, and the Enmity, the Coals of Fire that are kindled, and the great Burning. Take heed of thinking slightly any more of sin; let that be look't upon as the greatest evil, worse than death; for that can but hurt the body, if sin (which is the sting of it) be taken away; or worse than Hell; for God doth own himself to be the Author of Hell; he hath prepared the fire, *Matth. 25. 41.* but the Living and Holy God utterly disclaims sin; though the sinner be God's Creature, yet not sin, that calls the Devil Father, and 'tis said to be his Lust, *John 8. 44.* and his work, *1 John 3. 8.* Well, let me entreat thee to remember this that

that follows : Thou canst not do a worse thing than sin : Sinner, thou hast no reason to love sin : When wilt thou fall out with that which hath brought thee out with God ? How injurious is it every day to thee ? How doth it hinder communion with God ? How doth it pollute and defile to thee every thing thou settest about ? Sin hath gathered a pile, and put fire to it, upon which thou must be laid if thy heart do not come to be changed, and there thou wilt be consuming night and day, yet so as thou shalt have a Being, an unspeakably miserable one for ever : Oh ! thou shouldst never have a favourable thought of sin more. Other inferences might have been drawn, but so much for the first *Use*.

The next shall be something by way of *Caution* : First of all, Do not put off what is spoken, under the notion of Legal and Old-Testament-Preaching : There is a strange itch among men this way ; and their arguings in this matter are much in favour of their Lusts, very ordinarily : They would lye down and sleep upon the bed of sin, and have none rise up to make them afraid ; they are loth to have their rest and quiet disturbed, while they are prosecuting and fulfilling the desires of the flesh : They would keep their false peace as long as they can, though it be like to prove the ruine of their Souls : none must stop and controul them by the sound of Judgment, though they see them perishing : But the heart is very deceitful, and many shift off all
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by saying, That this Doctrine of Wrath and Judgment, and of consuming Fire, is not suitable to the Dispensation they are under; And this minds me of the Fourth Doctrine, which was about the beginning of this Discourse drawn from the Text:

That it is not unsuitable to a Gospel-state, nor to a Gospel-Ministry, to press to Duty by Arguments drawn from the terribleness and dreadfulnes of Gods Wrath and Vengeance. And here I should have taken the occasion to enlarge something about this matter, but that I see the Paper swelling to a greater bulk by far, than I had first of all intended; yet give me leave to remember you of the Text, and something to improve it, as to the business now before me.

You see 'tis brought in as a reason of the Exhortation propounded *ver.* 28. How can it be imagined, That such a way of arguing and pressing to duty, was seasonable at the time when this Epistle was written, and yet unseasonable now? The persons to whom it was written, were such as had embraced the Christian Faith, and it was written after the Expiration of the *Levitical* Shadows and Ceremonies: There is much light which may be fetcht in from other Scriptures, to confute this loose Assertion of many, That it is an un-Gospel-like practise to plead with men at all about leaving off sin, by Arguments drawn from the danger they are in by reason of sin. Christ the Prince of Peace, the Messenger of Life, denounced many woes against the ungodly, and

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and made frequent mention of Hell-fire: Oh what thundering words proceeded from the mouth of him who is the Author of Salvation! Shall the Servant be blamed for following the example of his Master herein? Did not Christ know what Doctrine was fit to be preached? And did not the Apostles often warn of the end which the way of sin did lead to? how the wrath of God comes upon the Children of Disobedience, and the like? *Eph 5:5, 6.* What heaps of Scripture-instances may be given in this thing?

Is the world better than it was in those times? if it were better, there would be need of such Preaching: But alas, the dregs of former Ages are fallen upon this last and worst Age; iniquity doth abound, and Love doth wax cold. *Matth. 24:12.* we find the most rowling Sermons, that we can preach little enough, yea too little to provoke persons to diligence in the matters of Salvation; they had need speak hard who would awaken dead men, yea, so many that are twice dead; to tell men only of the rich Grace, and free love of God, though it may please, yet 'tis not like to be so profitable.

But here is that in the Text which may stop the mouths of such as argue against this course of Preaching: Is not this a New-Testament Doctrine? And is not this a New-Testament-Title? God hath a great many Titles in the Scripture, a great many sorts of Names; but this is as full of terror and dread as any one I know of in the Scripture.

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The same God who hath proclaimed his Name, a God *gracious and merciful, abundant in goodness, pardoning iniquity*, is a *Consuming Fire*. And this is a Name and Title by which God will be known in all Christian Churches, to the end of the world: Nay, this place being in the Old-Testament as well as in the New, why may we not leave this Observation, That Arguments drawn from the terribleness of Gods Wrath to deter men from sin, are as suitable now in the times of the new Administration, as ever under the old Administration: Search, and you will find, That there be as terrible, yea more plain terrible threatnings in the New-Testament, than in the Old.

2. Another thing by way of Caution, may be this: Let not sinners upon the hearing or reading of the terribleness of Gods Wrath, say, their case is desperate, and past all hope of recovery: this devouring fire will certainly consume and destroy us; we perish, we perish, for God hath been greatly incensed and provoked by us, and we are as dry stubble fitted for the burning. My design in this Discourse is to drive sinners out of themselves, and to provoke them (what I may) to flye for Refuge to Jesus Christ. Some upon the loud cry of Fire, Fire, have been roused up from their natural sleep, and who can tell but by the warning now given of the Fire, Fire of Gods Wrath, some or other may be stirred up from the sleep of sin, and so apply themselves to the use of the Gospel-remedy;

as that they may come to have the light of life. The door of hope is not yet shut and bolted up ; while there is a Reprieve , there is a possibility of escaping the Execution of the Sentence of the fiery Law against thee : God is plenteous in Mercy, and his Power is infinite ; the Almighty Arm is not shortened, that he cannot save : *Paul*, a mad persecutor once , was afterwards a zealous Preacher of the Faith which he once destroyed. Some of the zealous *Corinthians* were in times past, such as walked after their own ungodly lusts, *1 Cor. 6. 11.* Christ's Blood can put out this Fire, and will for such on whom it comes to be sprinkled : Pardoning-Grace and Mercy can cover greater as well as lesser abominations, *Jer. 3. 7.* *And I said after she had done all these things, Turn unto me : What things were those ? You may find, if you look before in the Prophecie, They play'd the Harlot , they said they were Lords, and would not come to God, Jer. 2. 31.* They had a Whores forehead, and refused to be ashamed, *Chap. 3. v. 3.* They did evil as they could, *v. 5.* Sin with all their might and strength. Now after these and other abominations, the Lord said , *TURN unto me ;* think upon it , thy wound is not greater than can be cured ; there is Balm in *Gilead* , with the Lord there is help and strength , he can break down the highest hold of sin, and pluck up weeds of the deepest rooting ; he can wash off the blackest spots , and purge out the thickest dross and scum, and dry up the deepest Ocean of Corruption

ruption, he can conquer the greatest difficulties, and remove all seeming impossibilities, he hath magnified his Grace towards many great sinners heretofore, in justifying and sanctifying them; and his store-house of Mercy is as full now as ever; and therefore thou shouldst encourage such a hope, that God may yet embrace thee in the bosome of his love; reconcile thee to himself through Christ, and receive thee into the everlasting Arms of his Mercy:

But then *3dly*. Remember this withal, That thou do not presume of escaping the everlasting Burnings; what ever the manner and course of thy life shall be: That which I spake to thee before concerning thy condition, though it be sad and dangerous, yet 'tis not hopeles and quite desperate; I was induced to mention from the promises of Pardon and Reconciliation, upon believing and repenting. But now if thou hearest what the Lord hath threatned, and say it shall go well with thee, though thou continue to walk after the counsels and imaginations of thy own heart, and to cast off the thing that is good, know this day; that the Lord will be terrible to thee, *Dent. 29. 20.* what ever thou mayest promise to thy self, his anger and his jealousy shall smoke against thee, and the curses written in the Book of the Law, shall lye upon thee. The building of hope which thou raisest upon thy outward Church-priviledges, and thy bodily exercise in the matters of Religion, and upon the general apprehensions which

which thou hast of Gods mercy, will fall and perish : those whom God will save, he will save in his own way : he will save thee from thy sins here, if thou be saved from the devouring fire of his wrath hereafter. *Ezek. 14. 3, 4. Son of man, these have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face, therefore speak unto them, thus saith the Lord, I will answer him that cometh, according to the multitude of his idols : They came pretending that they were willing to have counsel and direction from God, but their hearts were set upon their sins, and they had rooted and settled purposes to continue in them ; and God tells them, that he would answer them, not according to what they did expect ; but according to their abominations : and so now, you enquire it may be, with the Mouth after God, as if you did righteousness, and were willing to keep his Ordinances, when all the while your hearts are married to your lusts ; there is this, and that stumbling block of iniquity before your faces, the bent of your souls is towards sin, and your hearts say you will do as it seemeth good in your own eyes ; now if you keep up, and continue such purposes, and fulfil as it were, with your hands what you speak with your mouth, God will answer you according to your abominations, and reward you according to your works ; and if you would hear more yet about the portion of such persons, see *Psal. 11. 6. Upon the wicked**

he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone; and an horrible tempest; here is an allusion as it seems, to the terrible destruction on Sodom; and it follows, this shall be the portion of their exp.

Fourthly, And all that shall be mentioned by way of caution, shall be this; Look to it, that you do not put off this from your selves, as if not concerned in it, unto others: this is the fault of very many; they hear and read for others, they it may be say, this is a proper and suitable word to such, and such; they would do well to consider of it, and lay it to heart; but what is all this about the dreadfulnes of Gods wrath to such a one as I? Ah Friends, take heed that self-love, and self-flattery, do not undo you; there is not onely such a thing as flattering from another, which doth occasion many to judg otherwise of their state and of their waies than is meet; but great multitudes also flatter themselves; they draw a thick cloud and mist over their own eyes; they put cheats and fallacies upon their own souls: they shut their own eyes, and call that good, which is evil, and that evil, which is good, and put darkness for light, and light for darkness, and bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter, Isa. 5. 20. I have much to offer about this matter, having insisted largely on those words in the way of my Ministry, but I must forbear.

Yet here let me mind you of a Doctrine drawn from the Text, about the entry of this

this Discourse; Such as denounce the wrath of God against others in the case of Disobedience, should reflect inwardly upon themselves, and turn the sharpest edge of the threatnings against their own souls in the like case; you say such and such are concerned in it; yea, and thou also shouldst say, if I hate God, if I reject his words, if I am such a one as do not frame my doings to turn to them, this fire will devour me, as well as others; God is no respecter of persons: whosoever is a sincere follower of Christ, him he will spare: but whosoever is not, and so abide, though rich or poor, bond or free, the long revenging hand of God will find him out. The Doctrine but now mentioned, may be largely opened; especially with respect to Ministers, they should inwrap and infold themselves in the threatnings; I mean tell others, that if they to whom God hath committed the word of reconciliation, should be found in their natural enmity against him, sound unrenewed and unconverted, this sin would burn them up; now this may be useful many ways:

First of all, to remove or weaken the suspicion of our venting our wrath and bitterness when we denounce Gods wrath: the people sometimes say, when we speak hard words, the Preacher was angry, and could not contain himself, his rage and spleen did break out very much, and the like; and this is one way by which they harden themselves against the words of Truth and Soberness:

Now when we include our selves as above-mentioned, it may abate the jealousie and take off the seeming colour for such a re-tortion, and while we discharge our duty, we should, what in us lies, remove the occasion of mens rejecting the counsel of God, to the indangering of their souls.

Secondly, It may help on the work of God among people; (this course being more effecting and less offensive, then if we excluded our selves) may be made use of by God, for the conveying of the word to the peoples understandings, and consciences, and hearts; for the imprinting and rooting of Scripture Truths in their souls: and should not such as fish for souls, use what holy skill they can to catch the souls of those they bestow their labour and pains with? 2 Cor. 12. 16.

Thirdly, It may be of great use to quicken Ministers themselves to their duty; to provoke them to a due search and examination of their own hearts and ways: but I may not enlarge upon this, yet consider as to the matter in hand, what is spoken ver. 25 of this Chapter: if others escape not who refuse Christ speaking to them, neither shall we, if we turn away: and Chap. 2, 3. *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation:* The threatning there implied, is of sore wrath and vengeance from God to such as neglect this salvation: If I or any of you neglect it, we shall perish without remedy:

Oh let such, whether Ministers, or people, as say the wicked shall be turned into hell, say, if we are found wicked, this will be our lot and portion: Oh be wise for your selves! what heavy stripes shall they be beaten with, who know their Masters will, and do it not? *Luke 12. 47. and see Rom. 2. 1, 2. Therefore thou art inexcusable O man, whoever thou art that judgest, for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thy self, for thou that judgest, doest the same thing:* Let me entreat thee not to overlook, as to thy particular concernment, any one word of God, that thou knowest: and say, what I do not know, Lord teach thou me: and labour that every truth may have its due operation upon thy heart: see that the word of the Lord be for thee, and not against thee: that the terrible wrath sparkling out in this threatening, may not fall upon thee: and thus much also by way of caution.

A word in the next place by way of Lamentation.

Is God a consuming fire, and so terrible in his justice against the ungodly? then here is a very just and proper occasion to take up a bitter wailing and lamentation over such: Oh that my eye did more affect my heart! oh my bowels! my bowels! Oh that my bowels were more troubled within me! Oh that I were pained more at the heart, and that my bowels did sound, as it were, like

an harp within me, and my inward parts
 for the Daughter of my people! Oh that my
 head were as water, and my eyes a fountain
 of tears, that I may weep day and night, e-
 ven poor, perishing souls: turn away from me
 and let me weep; for the Lord hath called
 for sorrow, and mourning: what a weeping
 was there in Egypt, when the destroying
 Angel had been abroad, and taken off the first
 born in every Family, so that there was not an
 house where there was not one dead? *Exod.*
12.30. It was the outward distress which
 they bewailed; but what is that to the Plague
 of a hard heart? to a state of corrupt nature,
 which makes poor souls in danger of hell
 fire? Amongst us there be many whole Fa-
 milies which are dead; dead in trespasses,
 and sin; scarce any else but dead persons;
 the dead are by many more than the li-
 ving; and the death is fit unto all such
 as remain under the power of it, will end
 in the death of soul and body in fire that
 cannot be extinguished; if we could weep
 a whole Ocean of tears and blood, we can-
 not sufficiently bewail the misery of such:
 Ah! that such of the same flesh and blood
 with our selves, some that ~~be~~ in the same
 womb, that dwelt in the same family, that
 went up to the worship of God together,
 that have eaten and drunken together, sate
 under the same Administration of Gospel
 ordinances, and the same overtures of grace
 and mercy; that each multitude in every
 corner of the nation, and scarce any of our
 near

near friends and relations after the flesh, but are such who, as far as can be discerned, are as stubble near dry, and fitted to be fuel for this fire! where is the bitter sighing, and deep groaning, and heart-breaking, that there should be for this?

How would it pierce our souls to see them tumbling, and roasting in such fire as we have here? what a burning of compassion, as it were, would it kindle in our hearts to see their flesh frying, to hear their pitiful screechings and out-cries? But what is such a burning, if that were all, to the other, which I have been speaking of? 'tis not so much as the singeing of the hair, or the scalding of the flesh, to the burning of a leg, or an arm; the difference is so great, that I know not what to say concerning it: and though it be not present, yet the threatening being true, and as certainly to be fulfilled upon the impenitent, as it were already done, it should more affect us; When *Nadab* and *Abihu* were slain with fire, for offering up *strange fire*, the whole House of *Israel* was to bewail the burning, *Levit.* 10. 6. Oh! let all such as have found Grace and Favour with God, cry out, and sigh, even to the breaking of their loins, to think of the hot wrath that is even ready to break out against so many, if they repent not; *Horror* (saith the Psalmist) *taketh hold of me, because of the wicked that forsake thy Law*, *Psal.* 119. 53. *Zalgnapah, Horror*; the word signifies a very horrible, as it were, a burning fiery tem-

Zalgnapah

pest, a very heavy and stormy tempest was upon him, when he did consider what would become of such as did leave God's Law, and turn in their hearts after vain things, which cannot profit; he was overwhelmed (as it were) with confusion and astonishment, in the thoughts of it; a burning, fiery tempest (as it were) was upon his Soul, to think of the burning, fiery tempest that was like to come upon them hereafter: And in the same Psalm, *Rivers of waters run down my eyes, because of them who keep not thy Law*: Oh how will our Relations and Friends endure to lye for ever in a bed of destroying fire? How will they endure to bear a part in the mournful ditty, with Devils and damned Spirits, howling and weeping, and gnashing of teeth, and crying out, Wo and Alas, for ever and ever. Poor deluded Souls! who hath bewitched them, that however they hang by the weak thread of this frail life, over the bottomless Sea of God's Wrath, yet that they should think they are sailing into the Ocean of endless joy and pleasure? Poor creatures! how strangely are they besotted? How void and destitute of spiritual sense and feeling, that they should go upon coals of fire, and yet think they are in no danger of being burned? What, will they never see the Clouds of wrath which do gather upon them, till they rain down fire and brimstone upon them? Is not God's anger (do they think) grown hot enough against them, that they draw one iniquity after another, with such long cords of vanity?

vanity? Every sin is (as it were) a coal of fire, and do they think they shall not be miserable enough, that they heap so many coals of fire upon their own heads?

See the estate of souls under the bondage of corruption, cryeth out aloud, *Have pity, have pity upon me, oh my Friends*: The persons themselves, it may be, say, *Weep not for us, keep your tears and your lamentations for your selves*; but the more there is of such language as this, the greater and the lower the cry is from their frame and condition; *Let open the springs and flood-gates of sorrow and mourning over us*; *Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by? Care you not if we be banished from the presence of God, and punished with everlasting destruction?* Oh put on bowels of mercy and compassion, tears and prayers, weeping, lamenting; supplication over such may, for any thing you know, be powerful and prevailing with God, through Christ, for their recovery; and if you would weep over such, weep now, lest after a while God's hand doth take hold of Judgment, and seal them up under his fiery wrath for ever; Tears and Mourning will come too late for them then.

I come now to a Use of Exhortation; and therein I purpose to address my self to two sorts of persons,

First, To such as are in a state of sin, and have not the Lord for their God in such a special manner as Believers have.

Second.

Secondly, To such as are accepted in Christ, and so delivered from the devouring fire of God's Wrath.

First of all, To such as are in a state of sin, and so to be swallowed up in the Flood of fiery Vengeance, if they abide in unbelief and impenitency. But before I lay down the Exhortation, let me here insert a few words to prevent some mistakes, with respect to the persons I am now treating with; for few will own themselves to be Children of Wrath, and Heirs of Destruction: Many mens wayes are clean in their own eyes, (*Prov. 16. 2.*) though they be never so foul and lothsome in the eyes of God.

Now this I would entreat you to consider, That all men naturally are corrupt, under God's Wrath and Curse, liable to all miseries here, and hereafter, to death, and to the torments of Hell, *Ephes. 2. 3. Rom. 3. 20.* All naturally were shut up under the condemning-sentence of Gods Law, under the chains of guilt, and Gods fiery displeasure, *Gal. 3. 10.* In *Adam* we all sinned, and came short of the glory of God; and we brought into the world with us that for which we deserved to be punished with eternal destruction; and from the first transgression did flow to us such corruption and vitiousness of nature, that we were void of all righteousness, and disposed to all evil: And so long as persons remain in this condition, they go on further provoking God, and augmenting his fierce wrath against them, and there is an absolute necessity of a
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gracious change to pass upon us, in order to salvation, *John 3. 3.* Now most persons live and dye unreconciled to God, and unrenewed, and so under a continual, actual liableness to condemnation,

And that you may the better understand who those persons are that to this day are under the bonds of the guilt of Original and all actual sins, and so as yet in an undone, perishing state, consider these following particulars:

First of all, They are such as are not born the second time, as are not renewed after the Image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, *Eph. 4. 22, 23, 24.* God will be a consuming fire to all remaining still out of Christ; and the Apostle saith of such as are in Christ, *That they are new Creatures, old things are passed away, and all things are become new, 2 Cor. 5. 17.* This is not to be understood of a full, absolute perfection of Sanctification in this life; but there is a renewing and cleansing of every faculty of the Soul, and of every member of the Body, when a person is joined to the Lord, so that he is called a new man, and a new creature.

There is a change upon the mind, there is a sanctification of the understanding, hence that expression, *Col. 3. 10. Renewed in Knowledge;* and *Rom. 12. 2. Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds;* and we read of pure minds, *2 Pet. 3. 1.* New creatures understand spiritual things, spiritually; they so know the truth, as to love it, their carnal reasonings

sonings stoop and veil to the Wisdom of God.

2. The heart and will is renewed also, *Ezek.* 36. 26. *A new heart also I will give you.* *Psal.* 110. 3. *They shall be made willing in the day of Gods power*; their proud wills are subdued, and made subject to Gods Will, so that they chuse the things that please him, and take hold of his Covenant, *Isa.* 56. 4. They consent to his Law, that 'tis good, and take his Statutes for their Heritage, *Psal.* 119. 30, 173.

3. The Conscience also is renewed, *Heb.* 9. 14. where we read of purging the Conscience from dead works: and *Heb.* 10. 22. hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience; and else-
1 Tim. 3 9 where, holding the mysterie of faith in a pure Conscience: Now a Conscience that is pure, is tender of God's Honor, and smites for inward sins, as well as for such as break out in the life, and for lesser, as well as for the grosser sort of evils; as *David's* Conscience, for cutting off the lap of *Saul's* Garment; some would have made nothing to take away his life. And a renewed Conscience lothes sin, and is burthened with the motions of the flesh, with the stirrings of lust and corruption in the heart, as is clear in the case of the Apostle, in the latter part of the 7th to the *Romans*, sin is grievous to it; a pure Conscience useth to groan and travel with pain under the pressures of it, and is weary of sin; and 'tis as a Watchman in the soul, to espy evil; and it useth to give warning to the soul, to make resistance;

sistance; saith, as it were, What meanest thou, O Sleeper? arise and call upon God; and, the *Philistines* be coming upon thee; and it useth to prompt the Soul to yeild due obedience to God, *Hebr. 9.* the latter part of the 14th ver. and it useth to prompt the soul to do holy duties in a holy manner.

4. The affections are renewed also, *Gal. 4.* 24. They that are Christs, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts of it; the affections which were misplaced, and set upon wrong objects, are now set upon Christ, and Heavenly things.

1. They have new Desires, *Psal. 73* 25. there is none they desire in comparison of God, *Isa. 26.* 8. the desire of their souls are to him, and to the remembrance of his Name; they desire to fear him, *Nehem. 1.* 11. they are described to be such as hunger and thirst after righteousness, *Matth. 5.* 6. So far as they are renewed, 'tis meat and drink to them to do the will of God. See *Psal. 42.* 1.

And 2^{dly}, They have new Love; and that is a Whet-stone to desire, that doth sharpen, and put an edge upon it; whereas they loved the world, and the things of it most, now they love God most; they love Christ before Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Countrey, and Estate, and Life, and all, and before all the Treasures, and Pleasures, and Honors of the World, *Luke 14.* 26. *Mat.* 10. 37. Gracious persons are described to be such as love God, *Rom. 8.* 28. and see *1 Joh.* 2. 15, 16. And so I might instance in other Affections,

Affections : They have new Hatred; whereas they did hate God as just and holy , and hate his commands, his holy counsels and instructions, *Rom. 1. 30. Psal. 81. 15. Luke 19. 14; Prov. 1. 22, 25, 29.* now they abhor that which is evil, and they lothe themselves for their iniquity and abominations; *Ezek. 36. 31. Psal. 119. 104, 163.* and in the same Psalm 'tis said, *I hate vain thoughts : but thy Law do I love.* So they have new sorrows, new indignation, *2 Cor. 7. 10, 11.* and so of other affections : and they have new ends, the glory of God, the spiritual and eternal good of their own and others Souls; and they have new Principles, they walk not after the flesh, but the Spirit, *Rom. 8. 1.* And they are led by the Spirit, *ver. 4.* and they have the Principles of Faith and Love, and they walk before God in newness of life, *Rom. 6. 4. and Rom. 7. 4.*

1 Cor. 10.
31.

Now let me entreat you to deal faithfully with your selves; search your hearts, and try your wayes; Are you in Christ? are you new Creatures? are old things past away? are all things become new? nay rather, are not old things yet remaining as before? I would not discourage any who are gracious in the lowest degree, but labour to encourage their hearts, and strengthen their hands in God; and so neither would I feed and nourish the false hopes, and groundless confidences of any, but speak the plain truth, as it is in Jesus.

Now then consider your states and wayes, Is there not in some of you your old blockish
and

and gross sottish ignorance, yet remaining? and in others of you, who know (it may be) much, as to the notional and speculative part; are not the apprehensions you have of spiritual and heavenly things, slight, and superficial, and ineffectual, as to any saving influence upon the heart? Do not you keep your old carnal Reasonings against pure Religion, against Gospel-strictness? Do you not look upon Heavenly things with a carnal eye? Are not you so dark-sighted as not to see such beauty and comeliness in the wayes of God, as to draw your hearts and affections after it? Do not you keep up your old carnal excuses, and your old carnal pleas and arguings against yeilding subjection to the Word of God? Do not your hearts chuse your own wayes? Are not they set upon sin? Are not they exercised with covetous practises, and with voluptuous practises, and with ambitious practises? Is not the palate of your souls still unchanged? Have not you your old tastes and favours? You did mind earthly things, and do not you so still? Do not your souls delight themselves in their old abominations? Do not you keep up your old enmity against the power of godlinesse? You did say in your hearts, Christ should not reign and rule over you, and do not you say so still? Is not your old empty way of discoursing, remaining? and your old manner of walking according to the course of the world? have not you your old carnal Principles? Is not Self your Bias? Do not you speak to your selves,
and

and eat and drink to your selves , and live to your selves ? Are not you without the Principles of sound Faith , and sincere love to God still ? Do not you keep up your old ends , and your old wicked wayes ? You were filthy , and are not you so still ? You were haters of holiness , and despisers of those that are good , and are not you so still ? If men would make a true report of matters , there be very few but must say , they are of the old *Adam* ; old , and not new creatures to this day : And let not any such think , that they are in an actual state of freedom from the wrath to come ; for they are , still under the curse , and children of wrath still ; I would not for never so many thousand worlds , dye the death of such , if they remain in this estate still .

2. Such as are in Christ , and freed from the curse , they have the Spirit of God dwelling in them in a special manner , *Rom. 8. 9. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ , he is none of his.* Now the Spirit is holy , and 'tis in a pure heart that he dwelleth , and he is a Spirit of Grace and Supplications , *Zech. 12. 10.* he enables those whom he joineth to Christ , to pray with gracious affections , to call upon God in truth : and see *Rom. 8. 26.* and it is a Spirit of Life and Power , quickneth those in whom he dwelleth , and it melteth and breaketh the heart , so that there is right mourning for sin . If you would pass judgment upon your selves , by what is spoken , you cannot say but you are such as shall be consumed by the

the Fire of God's Wrath, if a gracious change do not yet pass upon you.

3. Those who are by Christ freed from these burnings, they are conformable to Christ in his Death and Life; as he dyed for sin, so they are dead to sin; as he is risen, so they are risen to a Life of Grace and Holiness, *1 John 2. 6. 1 Pet. 4. 1, 2, 3. Rom. 6. 4, 5.* Now they that are dead to sin, have the strength of it so broken, as that it doth not reign, not bear dominion over them, as before; and they live a life of holiness, *Rom. 6. 14, 17, 18.*

Now then, if the case be so as hath been mentioned, that such, of whom it may be said, there is no condemnation to them, and that God will not be a consuming fire to them; that they are new creatures, and have the Spirit of God in a special manner dwelling in them, and are dead to sin, and alive to God, oh then sinner, consider what thou hast to do: How many of our Kindred after the flesh, and others, be there in every part and corner of the Nation, who are in such a condition as will certainly, if it be persisted in, bring them under the destroying wrath of this great and terrible God, who is consuming fire? Now therefore in pity and compassion to such, I would here leave something also, by way of Exhortation:

Is God indeed a consuming fire? Oh then sinner yet awaken, and consider what thou hast to do: I am not without some hope, that yet thou mayest be recovered out of

the snare of the Devil who hath led thee so long captive at his will; I cannot tell but yet the Lord may shew mercy to thee, that thou mayest live; and that the fire may not devour thee. Oh stir up and bethink thy self before it be too late; how glad would the damned in hell be, if they might come under the enjoyment of the Mercy of Life once more, and have Christ and Salvation again offered to them in the Gospel? but their day of Mercy is at an end, and the night of horrible darkness is come upon them, and such a Gulph is fixed, that they shall never return from the dismal horror that their iniquities have brought them to: If the roaring and yelling of such persons could reach thy ears, thou wert like to be affrightned and amazed with the wailing and howling they make from the bitter sense of their torment: Oh why shouldst thou not credit the voice of God, sounding forth in the Scriptures of Truth, concerning the terribleness of their condition. We read in the 16th of *Luke*, how the rich man being in Hell, would have *Lazarus* sent to his Brethren upon the earth, to testify unto them, lest they also should come into that place, where he lay scorching and sweltering in the flame: But saith *Abraham* in that Parable, *They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them*: So say I, You have *Moses* and the Prophets, and the Apostles, testifying in the Word, that you take heed what you do, and be aware of this fire; nay, shall I tell you, Another manner of person than *Laza-*

rm, hath come from Heaven to give warning of it, even the only begotten Son of God, he was clothed with flesh, and testified of the dreadfulnes of the Wrath, which will be the portion of those that perish; and he hath opened a way for escape to such as come rightly to use and apply the Gospel-remedy. Hear *Moses*, and the Prophets, and Apostles, speaking from God; hear the Son, so as to obey and live.

Sinners, let me treat with you a little about this matter, knowing the terror of the Lord, *2 Cor. 5. 11.* being something (through Mercy) affected in the fore-apprehension of the future, terrible Judgment, let me labour something to perswade you to flee from the Wrath to come; yet spare thy self; I do not mean thy carnal self; pity thy poor, perishing soul and body, acquaint thy self with God, and labour to be at peace with him; oh lay hold on eternal life, catch at the Crown, kiss the Son, lest thou perish from the way, *Psal. 2. 11.* lay down all thy weapons of Hostility; there can be no reconciliation to be had with God, without Jesus Christ: 'Tis observable, how that Counsel or Exhortation in the Psalm before, follows upon some terrible denunciations of Judgment against the Enemies of Christ? What mercy is here, That he who is able to destroy, and who hath been highly provoked to put forth his Power in destroying men for setting themselves by a course of sin, against the Lord, and his Anointed, that he should urge, and charge it

upon such as a duty, and exhort them with such moving Arguments as are comprehended in that Scripture, to look carefully after the performance of their duty, and give forth intimations, yea promises of favour upon the yeilding of due homage and submission to Christ. What, will nothing move and prevail with you? When the sinner returns to the dust from whence he came, then his ear is so stopt up, that it will never be opened more: But what, is it already stopt and shut up, never to hearken to counsel and instruction from the Lord, of how much concernment soever it be to the Soul? Will you alwayes be like the deaf Adder, which refuseth to hear the voice of the Charmer, charm he never so wisely? *Psal. 58. 4, 5.*

Psal. 2. 11. *the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that trust in him.*
largely
opened.

Shall I glance a little upon them for thy encouragement? *Kiss the Son*, make friendship with him, get into favour with him, that this consuming Fire may not destroy thee: Kissing is a token of friendship; when *Esau* was reconciled to *Jacob*, *Gen. 33. 4.* *he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him:* Oh run to Christ, and embrace him in the arms of Faith, and kiss him with the mouth of Love: Is there any hope of embracing Christ? Doth he offer himself to be kissed by the sinner, who hath spurned and

and kicked so much against him heretofore? And wilt thou refuse? Oh kiss and be friends with the Lord of Glory. Further,

2dly, Kissing hath been used in Worship, *Hos. 13. 2. Let the men that sacrifice, kiss the Calves*; let them worship them: Kissing being an act and token of Religious Worship and Honor; that Worship was Idolatrous, and there was none due to the Calves: But now Worship is due to Christ, being God. Let all that would escape the everlasting burnings, kiss the Son, give to him the Tribute of Worship and Service due to him.

3dly, Kissing notes Submission and Subjection, *Gen. 41. 40. When Pharaoh exalted Joseph in the Land of Egypt, he said, Thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled*; In the Hebrew it is, *J. 8. 4. At, or on thy mouth shall all my people kiss*; to wit, in token of reverence and submission. And when Samuel Anointed Saul to be King, he kissed him, *1 Sam. 10. 1. Oh my Brethren, do you kiss the Son of God*; the Lord hath constituted him to be King, do you reverence him, and submit to him; do you bow the knees of your souls to him, take him for your Lord, yeild to his Rule and Government; he will be angry if you do not kiss him, kiss him lest he be angry; you have provoked him much already, do not anger him more, by withholding the Love and Homage, and hearty Submission and Honor that is due to him.

If you anger him, by refusing still to subject your selves to him, you shall perish; the

hurt will redound to your selves, and he will have the honor of his Justice, in consuming you with the Fire of his Wrath; while you be in the way and course of your sins, pursuing your lusts, his anger may smoke against you, and pursue you; and he will certainly, sooner or later, tread under his feet, and trample upon all those that will not kiss him.

Do you think Christ is but a little provoked, and so there is no danger of your perishing? You are mistaken much in this matter, he hath been greatly displeased by you, and you have very deeply corrupted your wayes, and your doings; yet consider, one sin is enough to weigh you down to Hell, if there were no more; and a little portion of Gods Anger is hot enough to consume men; *Left you perish when his Wrath is kindled but a little.* Will not all this move and prevail with you? there is yet something more.

Blessed are all they that trust in him; If you despise and reject him, you will remain cursed; but if you receive him aright, and cast your burdened Sou's, with all the concerns of them, upon him, you are blessed: It was intimated before, That he would kiss you, if you kiss him; and here he expressly saith, Those that kiss him with the kiss of Faith, who come to trust in him, they are blessed: Now, would you be a blessed, or continue a cursed people? I pray Friends look after the Blessing.

But now here, to make the clearer way to what I have further to offer to you, I would a little open the great mylerie of the way of Life and Salvation, as revealed in the Gospel; and then I may come further to enforce the Exhortation.

First of all, consider, That God made man upright, but he sought out many inventions, *Eccles. 7. 29. By Adams disobedience we were all made sinners: We were conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity, Rom. 5. and Psal. 51.* We were all by nature a lump and mass of filthiness, altogether defiled, throughout Soul and Body, void of Righteousness, and in a state of Enmity against God, subjected to his Wrath.

2dly, No person remaining in a natural state, can please God, *Rom. 8. 8. Tit. 1. 15.* 'Tis not possible that any of the lost Sons and Daughters of men should be able to recover themselves, being without strength, *Rom. 5.* and dead in sin; a corrupt Tree cannot bring forth good fruit, spiritually good; the Sacrifice of the wicked, is an abomination unto the holy God, *Prov. 21. 27.* 'Tis not possible that Justification should come by any thing that we can do, *Rom. 8. 3. and Acts 13. 39.*

3dly, There is but one onely way of obtaining Peace and Reconciliation with God, but one way of Justification in the sight of God, and that is by Christ; Salvation is to be had by no other Name, but the Name of Jesus Christ, *Acts 4. 12. Job. 14. 6.* though we should speak never so much in prayer, and hear

never so many Sermons, and read never so many good Books, and give never so much Alms, and shed never so many tears, if we misse of Christ, the devouring fire of God's fierce and hot wrath, which burns against such of us, will never be quenched, but flame more and more against us, till it hath consumed us to the pit of destruction; if we kiss not the Son, there is no hope, we must perish; *he that hath the Son, hath life*; but he that comes not to have the Son, never comes to have life, 1 *John* 5. 12. 'Tis Jesus who doth deliver from the wrath to come.

4^{thly}, Jesus Christ was a Surety for all those that shall be saved. *Heb.* 7. 22. their sins were imputed to him. 2 *Cor.* 5. 21. *And taking the nature of man upon him, he obeyed the Law, and made full satisfaction to the Justice of God, by the offering up of himself a sacrifice.* We read how he dyed for his peop'es offences, *Rom.* 4. last. His blood ('tis said elsewhere) was shed for many, for the remission of sins. *Matt.* 26. 28. He dyed, that they might live; he bore the curse, that they might have the blessing; he wore a Crown of Thorns, that they might have a Crown of Glory; he was wounded, that they might be healed; he was bruised, that their sores might be bound up; his people did eat sower grapes, and his teeth were set on edge, *Isa* 53. 45.

5^{thly}, The righteousness by which any are justified, is the righteousness of Christ, *Rom.* 5, latter part of the 19th ver. and so *Rom.* 3. 24, 25. *Being justified freely by his Grace, through*

through the redemption that is in Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood. And so *Acts* 13. 38, 39. of which befor e.

6thly, Without faith a person cannot come to have any saving, eternal benefit by Christ, *John* 3. 16. The Scripture all along holds forth Salvation in a way of believing; the Spirit draws and joins a person to Christ, and gives him faith to receive Christ, when a person is justified, *1 Cor.* 6. 17. *Ephes.* 2. latt. and *John* 1. 12. and from Union with Christ, flows to a Believer Communion in the Merits and Benefits of Christ.

And thus having shewn you how the fire of God's Wrath comes to be quenched to any, I am now willing to renew and reinforce the former Exhortation, That thou wouldst consider what thou hast to do; search the Scripture well, and see what Counsel and Instruction that giveth in this matter; be sure, and fetch light from this Lamp which God hath set up to steer mens course, and to direct their feet in the way of Peace and Salvation.

I am loath to let this work pass out of my hand, without some more particular Instructions, that I may offer further help yet, about the management of this great Affair; and the most that I have to say, (besides the propounding of some awakening motions, and a general Direction for the hastening of this work) I intend to reduce to the two Heads of Faith and Repentance, and they are the great, substantial Truths of the Gospel;
and

and it were well that they were more Preached, as well as more practised.

We must call upon you to believe and repent, not as if these were in your power, for Christ is the Author and Finisher of Faith, *Heb. 12. 2.* and *Acts 18. 27.* and 'tis he that giveth repentance unto life, *Acts 5. 31.*

But yet we must say, Believe and repent, to shew persons what they ought to do, and that persons may be humbled in the sense and consideration of their own weakness, and to drive persons out of themselves, where is no strength and power for believing and repenting.

And in this way, who can tell how soon God may put forth his power, in working Faith, and in breaking the heart, and in turning persons from sin to God? The Prophet was to prophesie upon, or over the dry bones, *Ezek. 37. 7.* and in the next verse saith God, *I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live.* Though it was the Lord who could make dry bones live, yet the Prophet was to prophesie. And see *ver. 7, 10.* As he prophesied, there was a noise, and behold there was a shaking; he prophesied, and the breath came unto them, and they lived; and for any thing I know, God may breath upon these poor endeavours, and make you to stand up, and live to his praise.

The first Direction therefore, shall be this, Believe: *1 John 3. 23.* And this is his Commandment, That we should believe on the Name of Jesus Christ: The Gospel is the Power of God

God to salvation, to every one that believeth, *Rom. 1. 16.* If you would be saved from this consuming fury, you must believe, and God commands you to believe; though you sit under the hearing of the Doctrine of Faith, and profess subjection to the Gospel, you shall not have the Salvation therein offered, without believing; and *John 5. 29.* when some had asked, *What shall we do to work the works of God?* Jesus answered, *This is the work of God, That you believe in him whom he hath sent;* that is as if Christ had said, That you believe in me whom the Father hath sealed, whom he hath constituted Mediator, furnished with gifts, and sent into the world to do the work which belongs to a Mediator; if you would do that which is pleasing to God, if you would not have him to be a consuming fire to you, if you would have the meat which never perisheth, spoken of before, you must believe in the Son.

But now here it will be enquired, What is believing in the Son? What is Faith in Jesus Christ?

To this I intend to return an Answer, first, By laying down a Description of Faith, and by opening the parts of the Description, for your fuller and clearer understanding of it; and I shall endeavour, God willing, to pass this over in as few words as I well may.

For the Description, in the first place, A Description of Faith is a saving Grace, whereby a sinner convicted of sin, and pricked in heart for sin, assents to the Truth of the Scripture in his understanding.

derstanding, and consents with his Will to take Jesus Christ; and so coming to him, and receiving of him as offered in the Gospel, he rests upon him for life, and for salvation.

I come now in the second place to the opening of this; and much time may be spent hereabouts, but I purpose to be short.

1. That it is a Grace of God, was before shewn; and we may add that in *Col. 2. 12. Through Faith of the operation of God.* And so *Ephes. 1. 19, 20. And what is the exceeding greatness of his Power to us-ward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.* When God comes to enable a person to believe, he puts forth his Power, his mighty Power, the greatness of his Power, the exceeding greatness of his Power, the Power which was put forth in raising the crucified Body of Christ.

2. That it is a saving-Grace of God. We read in the Scripture, of the Faith of God's Elect, *Tit. 1. 1.* and of a believing to the saving of the soul, *Heb. 10. 39.* There is a great deal of believing, that is not a believing to the saving of the soul. *Acts 8. 13.* We read of *Simon Magnus*, that he believed, he made a profession of Faith in Christ, and yet it was said afterwards of him, That he was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, *ver. 23.* And *Luke 8. 13.* we read of the stony-ground Hearers, who had some slight taste of the sweetness of the Word, that they believed for a while, and then when persecu-
tion

tion arose, fell away. Men believe there is one God; and that Jesus is the Son of God, and yet if they do not take this God for their God, and this Jesus for their Saviour and Sanctifier, they will perish: See *James* 2. 19. Thou believest that there is one God, thou dost well, the Devils also believe and tremble: and see *Matt.* 8. 29. Thou must have other manner of Faith than Devils, or else thou canst not be saved.

3. 'Tis a Grace whereby a Sinner is convinced of sin, &c. Those that come not to see their misery by reason of sin, are not like to go to Christ; if they do not know their Malady, they are not like to go to the Physician of Souls for a cure and remedy. *Acts* 2. 37. *When they heard this*, &c. to wit, what Peter had been preaching, who did set before them their great sin of crucifying Christ, they cried out, *What shall we do?* And when the Lord was putting forth his Power to make *Saul* believe, he said, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* *Acts* 9. 4. and see *John* 16. 8, 9. Conviction is put down as the first work of the Spirit, in order to Conversion; persons use to be convinced of the great evil of sin, of the great danger of a way and course of sin, of the insufficiency of the Creature to help himself out of the misery he hath plunged himself into, and of the All-sufficiency of Christ to save, and the like; yet I must tell you, there is much Conviction which doth not end in Conversion.

4. It follows in the Description, Whereby a sinner pricked in heart for sin, &c. Persons must have a sense of sin, or else they are not like to look after Christ for ease and refreshing. *Matth. 11. 28. Come to me all ye that labour, and I will give you rest.* Souls must be sick of sin, or else they are not like to apply themselves aright to Christ, who is the healer of his People. *Acts 2. 37. They were pricked in their heart;* they were as if Needles had run into them; they felt the guilt of Christs blood to lye heavy upon them; sin was as a sharp goad in their sides, and as a keen knife and dagger in their hearts, and so *Acts 16. 29, 30, 31.* The Jailor came in trembling, and said, *What must I do to be saved?* and they said, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved:* Yet let me also say, there may be much compunction and remorse of Conscience about sin, where is no sound believing.

5. It follows in the Description, Whereby persons convinced, and pricked in heart, assent to the Scripture in the Understanding. The general object of Faith, is the whole Word of God. See *Acts 24. 14. Psal. 119. 66.* More particularly, There must be a believing that Christ is the Son of God, the Saviour of those who are saved; that he is a propitiation for the sins of his people, *John 20. 31. These things are written, that ye may believe; that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his Name.* The Scripture seems here to place much upon assenting to this Truth, That Jesus

fus is the Christ, the Son of God: And so
i. John 5. 1. And many abuse these places, to
 the strengthening of their false confidences:
 But a bare assenting is not enough, as you may
 see by what was said before, *James 2. 19.* In
 the times in which the New-Testament was
 written, it was a great matter to confess Christ
 to be the Son of God, that being the great
 thing denied: But assenting to this truth,
 must be understood as including the consent-
 ing act, and receiving of Christ, (of which af-
 terwards) or else it will leave men naked and
 destitute of Salvation.

6. As the understanding must assent to the
 Truth of the Scripture, so the will must con-
 sent to take Christ: In Marriage the Spouse
 must consent; *Rebecca* was askt whether she
 would go along with the man to be *Isaac's*
 Wife, *Gen. 23. 58.* It was said to her, *Will*
thou go with the man? and she said, *I will go.*
 So God asketh sinners, as it were, Will you
 have my Son for your Husband and Lord?
 And such as come to believe, being made wil-
 ling thereunto by God, and enabled, they say,
 I will take him. *Psal. 110. 3.* We read of be-
 lieving with the heart, as well as confessing
 with the mouth. *Rom. 10. 10.* Persons being
 effectually drawn by Christ, run after him,
 upon the discovery of their need of Christ,
 and of the fulness and excellency of Christ,
 and of the Supples in him suitable to their
 wants, they say, *Christ shall be ours.*

7. It follows in the Description, *And so*
coming to Christ: Rebecca, as she consented

to take *Isaac* for her Husband, so she went to him also; and so there must be a coming to Christ. Believing is sometimes expressed in Scripture by the souls coming to Christ, *Mat. 11. 28. Come to me, &c.* and so *John 6. 35. He that cometh to me, shall never hunger.* 'Tis not meant, not hunger after Christ; but, not hunger after the world, as before, or not be altogether without Christ and Grace any more. And it follows, *He that believeth in me, shall never thirst.* Coming to Christ, is believing in Christ, and so *John 7. 37, 38, 39.*

8. As there must be consenting, so there must be a taking of Christ, a receiving of him; Faith is the Souls Mouth to feed upon Christ, and the Souls Eye to see him, and the Souls Hand to receive him; *John 1. 12. To as many as received him, to them gave he power (or privilege) to become the Sons of God, even to them who believe in him.*

But now Christ must be received as he is offered in the Gospel; and here know, That Christ is a Prophet, and those who believe, take him for their Teacher, *Acts 3. 22. John 12. 46.*

2. Christ is a Priest, *Heb. 7. 21, 26.* Now as a Priest, he offered himself a Sacrifice, that he might save his people from their sins, *Mat. 1. 21. Tit. 2. 14.* who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie us to himself, a people zealous of good works; Those who believe, have sin mortified in them, *Gal. 4. 24.* they are a holy people,

ple, holy in heart, and followers of holiness in the life.

3. Jesus Christ is a King, *Acts. 5. 31. He is a Prince and Saviour.* And *Mat. 2. 6. Out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people;* and see *Col. 2. 7. As you have therefore received Jesus Christ the Lord, so walk you in him;* those that receive him aright, for a Jesus, a Saviour, receive him also for a King and Lord, to reign and rule over them: You must subject your selves to Scripture-Laws, or else Christ will not deliver you from the consuming fire of God's Wrath.

Lastly, So receiving of Christ, there must be a resting upon him for Life and Salvation. Believing is somewhere expressed in Scripture, by staying upon God, *Isa. 50. 10.* and by trusting in God, and the like: Now you must rest upon Christ, who is the Prince of Life, for Life: Men are dead out of Christ, but he makes men alive; you must rest on him for the Life of Grace, and of Glory, for Salvation; there is damnation to men out of Christ, but by Jesus Christ there is Life and Salvation, *1 Pet. 1. 9.* And thus much for the first Direction.

I come now to the second: Would you escape the everlasting burnings? then repent: though there be nothing in the creature which can deserve any thing from God, yet in this way he hath purposed and appointed to communicate his grace and mercy: those whom God in Christ reconcileth to himself, he brings to repentance: 'tis said, except men
O
repent,

repent, they shall all perish; *Luke 13.* 'Tis implied there, that such as do repent, shall not perish: and so *Ezek. 18. 30.* Repent, and turn your selves from all your transgressions, and so iniquity shall not be your ruine: And so *Isa. 55. 7.* Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon. And *Acts 3. 19.* Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, and so on.

But now here it may also be enquired, What is the repentance to which God hath made the promise of Salvation? I could willingly enlarge here, there being so many mistakes about this matter; but I am in some measure forced to contract, as I was also in the first direction; yet I may not altogether pass it over.

Metanoia, which we have in many places of the Scripture, and is Englished *Repentance*, signifies *After-wit*, or the minds recovering it self, so as to be wise after folly; implying, that ungodliness is great folly, and that men are never come to themselves, till they repent: See *Luke 15. 17.* Another word is *επιστροφή*, which signifies conversion; as there was a turning from God before, so when men repent, there is a turning to God. Repentance that is sound, doth mainly consist in a gracious change as to the inner man, which is upon the person that repenteth, the state of such a one is changed, the heart is changed,

changed, as well as the life : *Isa. 1. 16. Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings.* And *Ezek. 18. 31. Cast away all your transgressions, and make you a new heart.* Though there should be a change in the life, and never so many words in confessing sin, unless there be a change upon the heart, lest that be turned against sin, God doth not look upon us as repenting persons.

But to open this a little more fully, let me lay down a Description, and then speak a little to the particular parts and branches of it.

Repentance is a Grace of God, whereby persons having a sight and deep sense of sin, and apprehending the Mercy of God through Christ, do upon the Command of God in his Word, with shame and sorrow of heart for sin, and true hatred of it, turn from it unto God, and walk before him in ways of true obedience.

First of all, I say, 'Tis a Grace of God; 'tis he who kindleth repentings in the Soul, who boweth and breaketh the heart, and brings it out of love with its corruptions; hence those expressions, *Ezek 30. I will take away the stony heart, and I will cause you to walk in my Statutes.* We have marred our hearts, but we cannot mend them; men can harden their hearts, but they cannot soften them, *Acts 11. 18.* where 'tis said, *Then hath God also granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life.* There is that which is called Repentance, which is not repentance to life; such was that

of *Judas*, *Mat.* 27. And see what the Apostle saith, *2 Cor.* 7. 9, 10. there is a sorrow that is not after a godly manner; there is the sorrow of the world, which worketh death; but such as have Repentance to life, have it from the undeserved favour and free gift of God.

2. It follows in the Description, *Whereby persons having a true sight, and deep sense of sin.* If persons do not come to smart for sin, to feel their souls burdened and pressed with it, they are not like to have their hearts broken off from it; *Jer.* 31. 19. *Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh.* And in *Acts* 22. the persons were apprehensive of their sin and misery, and under great compunction, to whom Peter said, *Repent, &c.* for the remission of sin.

3. That I may hasten, 'tis said further, *Whereby such convinced, and sensible, do with shame, grief and hatred of sin, turn from it.* There is a double shame, the shame of the Conscience, and the shame of the Heart; there be both these in such as have the repentance that is to Salvation: *Jer.* 31. 19. *Ephraim said, I was ashamed;* 'tis said of the impenitent, *Jer.* 6. that they were not ashamed: Possibly some that are ungodly, may have some shame of Conscience, or shame because of such and such outward disgrace, or because of some shameful punishment, which their sins have brought upon them, *Ier.* 2. 26. *Who read of the shame of a thief when he is found; but the wicked have not such*

such shame of heart, as the Believer, because of the loathsome nature of sin, and because thereby a gracious and merciful God is displeased and offended. And there is deep sorrow for sin in such too, such as is expressed by a rent, broken heart, and mourning as for an only Son, *Joel* 2. 13. *Zech.* 12. 10. 'tis such a sorrow as makes sin bitter to the soul, even as gall and wormwood; such a sorrow as is for sin, because of the unkindness in it, and because of the dishonor which comes to God by it; 'tis a sorrow which is accompanied with true hatred of sin; the true Penitent is displeased with himself, because he hath so basely and wretchedly offended God, and been so miserably befooled by sin and Satan, because he hath so blurred and stained his soul; but of this I had an occasion to speak something of before. If the ungodly would but make a true report of themselves, it must be acknowledged, that instead of hating sin, they love and delight in it.

4. It follows in the Description, *Whereby persons do turn from it, unto God, and walk before him in wayes of true obedience.* *Joel* 2. 12. *Turn ye to me, saith God; With all your heart.* 'Tis not enough that the face be turned to God, but the heart must be turned also. And *Jer.* 3. 22. *Return, saith God, and I will heal you;* it follows, *We come to thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* And 'tis in vain to talk of repentance, where is no holy walking: *Mat.* 3. 7, 8. *John* seeing the *Sadducees* come to his Baptism, said, *O generation of*

Vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance. Repentance carries with it, sound humiliation, and true Scripture Reformation. Repentance is not like the turning of the door upon the same Hinge, which is never moved out of its place, but it turns things as it were, up-side down; the back must be where the face was; and the face and affections where the back, where hatred and contempt was; the inward frame must be changed, and the outward wayes and doings must be amended; whereas we were foolish and disobedient, serving lusts and pleasures, now we must serve God in righteousness and true holiness. But I shall pass this over, and proceed in a few words to urge and press what hath been spoken, upon thy Conscience.

Sinner, thou seest thy way, oh walk in it; thou hearest what the Lord doth require, labour with the greatest seriousness and diligence, to apply thy self to the doing of his Will. Do not despise and set at nought the Counsels and Instructions of his Word any longer; let not the Lord hear any more such Language from thee, *Depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of thy wayes: What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray to him?* Job 21.14, 15. *Do not stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful:* Let the Counsel of the wicked be far from thee; instead of thrusting away thy shoulder, take Christ's yoke

yoke upon thee, and bear the burden which he layes on; for his yoke is easie, and his burden is light; instead of putting away the Statutes of the Lord from thee, and wickedly departing from God, set his Precepts before thy eyes, and walk in his Truth, and keep thy self from iniquity, *Psal.* 118. 21, 22, 23. Draw nigh to God, come to him after all thy roving and wandering from him; cleanse your hands, oh sinners, and purifie your hearts, *James* 4. 8. Lift up thy hands to Gods Commandments, let thy feet run in the way which he hath set before thee; thou hast wrought too much evil already in the sight of God, yea, the least is too much; one sin imputed, is enough to weigh persons down to Hell; it were better to have the greatest Mountains in this World to lye upon one, than the guilt of one sin: But I say, thou hast done much evil; though God hath loaded thee with his Benefits, thou hast pressed him with thy sins; thou hast run a long course in the path of ungodliness, oh do not proceed any farther, *Ezek.* 44. 6. Break up your fallow ground, wash thy heart and life, lest God's fury break forth like fire, and there be no quenching it: Repent, and believe the Gospel, *Mark* 1. 15. Take heed after this Warning, of displeasing the true and living God, in whose hand the breath of thy nostrils is, *Dan.* 23. 5. lest he take it out, and cast thee into Hell. Oh take hold of the Covenant of Peace, *Isa.* 54. 10. When the children of *Israel* had sinned in the matter of the Golden Calf, and God's wrath

was waxen hot against them , and *Moses* had entreated him that he would not consume them, see what the Lord said unto the people, *Exod. 33. 5.* *Ye are a stiff-necked people, I will come up in the midst of thee in a moment , and consume thee . therefore now put off thy Ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.* Here is a threatening , yet withall, an intimation of favour upon humbling and repenting ; *Come, put off thy Ornaments;* Come, humble your selves, lay your selves low and prostrate before me ; lye down at my feet, labour to stand in the gap , and to turn away the fierceness of my wrath , that you perish not.

And so I say to you, Oh put your mouths in the dust , lay aside your Ornaments , be clothed with humility , take shame to your selves, judge and condemn your selves , say, Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face , but to thee belongeth Mercy : Oh abhor your selves for your sins, turn to God, that he may turn to you, and have compassion on you, and subdue your iniquities, and cast them into the depth of the Sea , that you perish not for them.

I pray think upon your ways, consider the state of your souls, study the need you have of Christ , and of his Grace and Salvation; lay aside your false hopes, and all those wrong mishapen conceits you have harboured of your selves, to the great prejudice and hurt of your souls. How apt are you to think God hath need of you, and can't be happy without

without you ; though he burn up and destroy never so many others , yet that he will spare thee, though thou proceed from evil to evil, and shouldst continue as thou hast begun, to imitate them in wickedness : Be not deceived, God is no respecter of persons ; neither thy parts, nor thy external priviledges ; nor any bare, outward, bodily exercise, that thou hast to shew , nor thy condition in the world, can commend thee to God. *Mark 16. 16. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved : and he that believeth not (be he baptized, or unbaptized, a Master, or a Servant, rich or poor, he) shall be damned.* And see *Gal. 5. 6. In Christ Jesus, nor circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith, which worketh by love :* And so *1 Cor. 7. 19. Circumcision is nothing, nor uncircumcision, but the keeping of the Commandments of God.* Thou hast indeed need of God, thou canst not possibly be happy without him ; but he needs not thy service, *Acts 17. 25.* He is infinitely glorious and happy in, and of himself from all Eternity ; and there will not be the least diminishing of it, though thou and never so many ten hundred thousands more should perish.

Oh then cast away thy false confidences, be no longer like the foolish builder, who buildeth upon the Sand ; which will tumble down, and come to nothing ; 'tis high time to be wise in the matters of thy soul, and to build upon the Rock, that thou maist not mis-carry at last, *Matt. 7. 24.*

Jer. 2. 35.

Go out of your selves, and labour to be reconciled to God through Christ; do not shift matters any more, nor excuse thy self, but deal plainly, and confess thy sins, with the aggravating circumstances of them; say, this and that evil have I done, so foolish was I, and ignorant, such offers of Grace have I refused; I have hardened my heart as an Adamant, and refused to return; I hated to be reformed, I was unwilling to be purged from my filthiness, I did not delight in Sabbaths; the Commandments of God were grievous to me, I have miserably consumed away my precious time in vanity: I was all for foolish mirth; and such discourse as was not edifying, and such companions as would let me alone quiet in my sins, and the like. Confess, I say, thy iniquity, and say, God may justly charge my sins upon me, and withhold his tender mercy: Read *Jer. 3. 13, 14. 1 John 1. 9. Prov. 28. 13.* In *Levit. 26. 40, 41, 42.* the Lord saith, *If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their Fathers, &c. and that they have walked contrary to me: if then their uncircumcised heart be humbled, and they accept of the punishment of their iniquity, then will I remember my Covenant, &c.* Remember this, That the confession, to which is made a promise of Mercy, is a sin-forfaking, and a broken-hearted confession.

! Now thou hast some light shining before thee for the directing of thy feet, oh walk in the Light; if you know these things, happy are you if you do them.

Bre-

Brethren, once more I say, Labour to be friends with God, that the fire of his hot displeasure may not consume you. The *Tyrians* and *Sidonians* made the Kings Chamberlain their Friend to appease *Herods* Wrath, *Acts* 12. Your course is to go to Christ, to get him for you, for this is he in whom the Father is well pleased, *Matt.* 3. 17. and those whom he receives into favour, and accepts, 'tis in his beloved Son, and all out of free-grace, to the praise of the glory of his Grace, *Ephes.* 1. 6.

I am not willing to leave this Exhortation, without laying down some awakening motives, though I do not purpose to enlarge upon them. The first shall be this.

If the anger of an Earthly King did burn against thee for thy miscarriage, especially if it were for some Treasonable Plot and Conspiracy, for which thy life is in danger, what projects and designs wouldst thou have to appease it? what care and diligence wouldst thou use to obtain his Pardon? How many Friends wouldst thou make use of to accomplish thy desire? and thou wouldst not think much to part with thy Estate, that thou mayest save thy Life. Here by the way, I freely declare my abhorrency and detestation of that abominably wicked fact of some Aspiring and Ambitious persons, committed a few years since in our Nation, in taking away the Life of our late Sovereign; *Every Soul must be subject to the Higher Power, Rom.* 13. 11. see *T. 3. 1.* But to return, I say, it were wisdom to use thy endeavour to turn away the
Wrath

Wrath of an Earthly King, whom thou hast provoked by thy misdemeanors, and the sense of thy concernment in this thing, were like to be quick, if thou seest Death approaching:

PROV, 16. *The Wrath of a King is as Messengers of Death: but a wise man will appease it.* 14.

But now consider, the King of Heaven is greater than all, and his Wrath burns unspeakably hotter, and 'tis as Messengers not of death only, but of deaths; of death temporal, and death eternal, which is worst of all: Unless his Wrath be appeased, he will kill soul and body; thou shalt dye once, and dye for ever. Oh that thou hadst a quick and lively sense of the great importance of the counsel which I have given thee. Oh labour to have his anger turned from thee.

The second Motive is this; What care wouldst thou use to escape the burning of thy body, if God should kindle a fire in the House where thou livest? whatever becomes of the bed thou dost lye on, or other goods which thou hast gathered together, though they were never so rich and costly, if the fire were near thee, and thou wert in danger of burning, thou wouldst leave all, and flye for thy life; thou wouldst chuse rather to go away naked, than lose thy life: Oh what hideous screeching and crying out is there sometimes, when upon a sudden fire is seen over, or near persons, or about their beds, Fire, Fire, oh for all loves hasten hither, and help, lest I and others be consumed by this Fire. The eyes of men, and the noise of the crack-
ling

ling of the Timber, and the sparks of fire in their ears, doth use very much to affect mens hearts, and quicken them to the vigorous use of proper means for their temporal preservation: Oh why should not the sparkling of God's Wrath, which thou mayest see in the burning threatnings of his Word, affect thy heart? Why should not the loud noise of Eternal Judgments, move and awaken thee to an industrious use of the means to escape this consuming fire? This is more dangerous, and more destroying, than any fire here: the greatest care should be to escape this. If thou shouldst escape a burning here, lest God come to be thy Friend, thou wilt be made fuel for a more dreadful fire.

Wilt thou have thy sins, though thou be burned for them? Read and consider that place well, *Matt. 5. 29, 30.* *If thy right eye offend thee, cut it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole should be cast into Hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off; 'tis profitable that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into Hell.*

3dly, Another Motive is this, God doth tender Peace and Reconciliation to thee: Do I come this day to thee without the Lord? no, he hath committed to us the Word of Reconciliation, *2 Cor. 5. 19.* He hath put an Olive-branch into our mouths; he hath bid us to carry to you the joyful tidings of Salvation; in his Name therefore I pray you, my dear Brethren,

thren, be reconciled; do not split your souls
 against the Rocks, do not stand out against
 your own mercy; as an Ambassador from
 the King of kings I come to you, and you
 must look upon it as though God did beseech
 you by me; I pray you in Christ, be recon-
 ciled, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. What, shall God, who
 is the party wronged and offended, sue for
 peace? Shall Christ come a begging at the
 door of the sinners heart, entreating him to
 open to him, and let in a Saviour loaden with
 all benefits, that he may be happy? And shall
 he be slighted and shut out? Will you bolt
 the door of the heart, and say, Away Jesus
 with thy Grace, and with thy Salvation, here
 is no entertainment for thee; I am married to
 lust, I have bestowed my affections elsewhere
 already, and I will stick to my first choice,
 how large an offer soever be made to win a-
 way my heart. Sinner, far be this from thee
 to requite the kind offer of Christ after this
 manner; rather thou shouldst say, Welcome
 Jesus, come and dwell in my Soul, come with
 thy Salvation to this House; let me have the
 fine Gold that thou bringest, that I may be
 rich, and the Eye-salve, that I may see, and
 the white Raiment, that my nakedness may be
 covered, and the Bread and Water of Life
 which thou speakest of, that I may not perish,
Revel. 3. 20. Will a sick man thrust off the
 Physician? Will a man ready to starve, refuse
 an Alms? Will one in *Turkish* Captivity, re-
 fuse a Ransome? Will one fallen into the fire,
 refuse help, that he may come out? Will he
 say,

say, Stand off, I am something scorched already, and I will be consumed ? The Physician is wont to be received in, and bid welcome ; the poor man takes the Alms, and thanks the giver ; the bond-man is glad with liberty ; he that is fallen, or falling into the fire, is thankful to him that saves him from perishing : Why, Christ would give the richest Alms, bring the best liberty, the best Physick, and the greatest Salvation, save thee from consuming Fire : Oh do thou thankfully accept his gracious offer, and receive him by Faith, and chearfully submit and yeild up thy self to his Rule and Government; let the sinner bid heartily welcome the Saviour of Souls : Shall the Lord stoop so low to entreat you to use the Remedy which he prescribes for your recovery ? Oh then stoop to him, submit to his instruction, and ever admire his Grace ; cry out, Is this the manner of men, O Lord God ? Will God take any of those that have been Enemies, into his Embraces ? Sure his Grace is wonderful ; be thou mine, and let me be thine for ever.

4thly, Consider, the Terms of Peace and Reconciliation to this God, who is consuming Fire, are very good and reasonable : Christ is the best Friend, the best Master ; his yoke is easie, and his service is the best service: the Saints who have proved and experienced it, have found it so ; they can set their seals to this truth. Oh do you tast also, and see how good the Lord is, *Psal.* 34. 8. come and prove him and his ways, and then you may be
able

able to bring in your Testimony to this also.

5thly, Consider, that God is the most dreadful and terrible Enemy; that which hath been spoken upon this subject, doth abundantly discover this: If all the World were against us, we were happy if God were for us; but all the world can't help us in this case, if God be against us.

6thly, Consider what care it is that men do take to quench the fire that is in their houses; what running and posting to and fro, is there then? Every one almost will be running with water to quench this fire. For shame, let even such outward things instruct thee; is not thy soul all in a flame with lust within? And is there not flaming fire, which thou art near to, and in danger of, from without? Labour to have sin subdued, and God's wrath appeased to thee; the greatest & chiefeest care should be about the principal and most necessary things.

7thly, Think upon the terrors and affrightments that were upon the hearts of the children of *Israel*; when God came in fire to give his Law; the people trembled, *Deut.* 19. 16. and see *Deut.* 5. 5. *Moses* told them that they were afraid by reason of the fire; And see *ver.* 25. they said, *Why shall we dye? this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more; then we shall dye:* But there will be other manner of terror and affrightment, and trembling upon the hearts of persons that shall persevere in their impenitency, when God shall in the day

of Judgment call them to an account for their transgressions against his Law.

And now to draw towards a close of this Use, let me bespeak thee as Christ did *Judas* when he had discovered the Traytor, *what thou dost, do quickly, Iohn 13. 27.* In the case of Fire there doth use to be very great haste, and if men sit still, and let it burn after it hath taken the wind, they may in a short time have no house to put their heads in; but there is not commonly any delay at all in this matter, men use to take the first warning; you need not call twice to a man, if he hears you to tell him his house is on fire, before he will run, and call upon others to help, and make what speed he can to quench it. Ah Friends, though delay be dangerous in such a matter, yet it is unspeakably more dangerous in the case of the Soul, which is more worth than a House or Lands, yea, than all the world. I call therefore after thee, as *Absalom* after the Lad which he sent for the Arrows to give *David* warning, *1 Sam. 20. 38. Make speed, haste, stay not;* so say I to thee, Make speed, haste, stay not. bestir thy self, and call upon others to help thee; do not say, to morrow; this consuming fire may destroy thee before that come, for any thing thou knowest, if thou delay: Oh! to day, while 'tis called to day, hear the Voice of God: *Heb. 3. 13.* Oh that after so many calls already, God should yet say, *to day!* Oh, now obey his voice; when *Sodom* was near the destruction by fire, that we read of the Angels hastening *Lot*, saying,

(Gen. 19. 15, 16.) *Arise, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the City; and while he linged, they laid hold upon his hand, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him forth.* Oh beware of lingring and loytering; how much of that hath there been already? but now arise, lest thou be consumed in thy iniquity: What, hast thou not made bold and rash adventures enough already? Hast thou not run hazards enough for thy eternal undoing? How many years hast thou been tempting God already? wilt thou tempt him yet further? Turn now to the Lord thy God, *Isa. 2. 12.* God will not strive with you still by his Spirit; Christ will not stand alwayes knocking: *Ok know in this thy day, the things belonging to thy peace, lest they be hidden from thy eyes:* Get to the Ark before the Flood of Divine Vengeance come: now a white Flag of Mercy is held out, who can tell, if thou delay, how soon that may be removed, and a fiery flaming Sword sheathed in thy bowels, to execute the vengeance of the Lord upon thee. Agree quickly with him, lest thou who art indebted to his Justice by thy sins, be bound hand and foot, and cast into that Prison from whence there will be no release.

Luk 12. 11

And this I would yet further counsel thee to, Forsake thy ungodly Companions, they hang about thy skirts, and hinder thee much from the way that is called holy. I would say more about this, if I had not spoken so much besides: Yet read *Acts 2. 40.* where Peter having exhorted the people to repent, when they

they desired his Counsel in the case of their souls, he further added, *Save yourselves from this untoward generation.* And see *Prov. 14. 7.* *Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge; and elsewhere, the companion of fools shall be destroyed, ver. 20.* Consider what wrong thy soul hath sustained by them already; what snares have they been, and as it were, clogs and fetters about thy heels? 'Tis high time to break these snares, and shake off these clogs: If they will needs perish, let them perish by themselves; do thou labour to deliver thyself from this consuming fire.

And here to conclude, Do not rest in any endeavours of thy own, but expect help and Salvation from God in Christ: Turn over thy sins to the Lord, I mean, entreat him to pardon them, and subdue them; take with you words, and turn to the Lord, and say, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, *Hos. 14. 22.* Entreat the Lord to blot out thy sins for his Names sake, *Isa. 43. 25.* to work in thee to will and to do of his good pleasure, *Phl. 2. 13.* Entreat him to open thy eyes, and turn thee from darkness to light, and to give to thee the pardon of thy sins; and if he do this for thee, thou shalt have an inheritance among them that are sanctified, *Acts 26. 18.* not onely freedom from burning, but many spiritual Priviledges here, and a fullness of joy at the right hand of God for evermore.

Pray and not faint. Oh that thou couldst truly say, Lord, if I should have all the World given me, that would not content me, if that must be all the portion that I shall have. I must have a Christ, I desire him as a Fountain of Pardoning and Purging Grace. I must have him for Justification, and for Sanctification.

And thus much for the First Branch of the Exhortation.

HEB.

H E B. 12. last.

For our God is a consuming Fire.

I Come now in order to speak something particularly unto those who are brought into such a state as, through grace, to be privileged with an exemption and freedome from the consuming fury in God, which the unbelieving and impenitent are to feel : and in the last Use, something may be spoken for their consolation and encouragement.

That which I do more especially intend to exhort them to, is something in the fore-going verse, to yeild to this great and holy God, the fear and reverence that is due to his Name, to serve him with awfulness and godly trembling. And this brings in the Doctrine, which remains only to be spoken to, namely,

Though the Lord doth stand in a very near and dear relation to believers, yet he hath not laid aside his Majesty, nor freed his people from an awful respect to him.

Others should fear God, besides the persons that I am now speaking to ; and a little (possibly) had been mentioned about that upon the former branch of this Use, if I had not been so exceedingly straitned in time, when what is here exposed to open view, was yet under my hand.

* *Tis every ones duty to fear God, and to fear him upon the consideration of what is here propounded in the Text, that he is Consuming Fire : Psal. 76. 7. Thou, even thou art to be feared; in the Hebrew it is, Thou art terrible, T H O U * : Thou art greatly to be feared, who can stand before thy face when thou art angry ? And see ver. 11. God is he who is to be feared : Moses speaking to all Israel, saith, Dent. 10. 12. And now what doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear him, and to walk in all his wayes, and to love him, &c ? And this was one end of that terrible Administration when the Law was given out of the Fire, that the people might fear God, Dent. 4. 10.*

But I shall here confine my Discourse to such as are gracious, and the rather, because of late some have been so daring and bold, as to expunge the fear of God out of the Catalogue of Graces; they have not been afraid to cry down fear, as unbecoming a Gospel-Spirit, and as if it were not consistent with sincere love to God, as if these two could not dwell together in the same heart; and experience hath abundantly instructed us, that this loose principle hath opened a door to much looseness in practise, and been the occasion of much rudeness and malepertness in publick Addresses to God, among some who in word and profession, have been great pretenders to Religion and Godliness; yea, to more intimate acquaintance, and to higher Communion with God, then sober-minded Christians speak of.

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I do not intend by any thing here mentioned, to cast reproach upon the generation of the truly righteous ; yet so far as any have offended, they should take shame to themselves : But I aim at a proud aspiring generation, who speak of such high attainments, and of their arriving to such a lofty Form and Degree in Christianity, as to be above all fear of God, and all trembling before his glorious Majesty ; and whose words and carriage are suited to their vile and base apprehensions ; and savour of such irreverence and unholy boldness , as makes the very ears of serious and awful Christians, even to tingle, and their hearts to shake and tremble within them ; the Counsel and Practise of such be far from me.

* I would a little endeavour in this part of the Exhortation , to discover the vanity and unsoundness of the former opinion , and the disagreement of the practise, to the humble frame, and reverend deportment , that the holy Scriptures of truth do very much commend and call for ; and also to settle and establish those who are sound in judgment, in the matter, about the fear and reverence which I am about to shew is due to God , and to stir them up to use all holy diligence to get and maintain a very deep and lively sense of Gods Majesty , a very serious and awful frame of Spirit, and to exercise all fear and reverence, as is becoming and befitting a person who hath to do with such a great and glorious Lord God.

Men of corrupt minds abuse (to the hardning and imboldning of themselves in their rudeness of carriage, and sawciness of expression) some Scripture-passages, as to instance in that 1 *John* 4. 18. *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment: he that feareth, is not made perfect in love.*

But to this I return a few words by way of Answer; and that which shall be spoken, may serve to cast a little light on some other Scriptures, urged and pleaded by some for the like purpose.

First of all, The plain and direct meaning of this place, seems to be this, That persons under the enjoyment of the sense and feeling of Gods special love and favour towards them, do not fear condemnation; they know they are to come before the Judgment Seat of God; but having the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, and finding their hearts working in love and affection towards God, they do not fear a sentence for everlasting destruction; if you observe and consider well what is mentioned before, v. 13, 16, and 17. you may see ground and warrant for this interpretation. If I know my self to be a lover of God in sincerity, I know that the appearing of Christ will be comfortable to me, that I shall lift up my head with joy, and be owned openly by God for one of his, and not be cast in the great day of Judgment: but now a person sincerely loving God, may be in great darkness about the condition of his soul, and possi-

possibly under the strong assaults and buffetings of Satan, fall under such dejection, as to fear he shall finally miscarry, and that all his profession will end in perdition : Dare you say, Where is fear of torment, of being condemned by God at last, there is no sound love of God ? this is unscriptural, and very uncomfortable ; you would offend much against great numbers of the generation of the righteous hereby.

But 2dly, Such as are gracious, do not forbear sin meerly for fear of torment, any of them ; for God hath put a principle of holy love into their hearts, and they are willing to serve him ; and so far as they are renewed, the Commandments of God are not grievous to them, 1 *John* 5. 3. They chuse the way of his Precepts, they obey from the heart the form of Doctrine delivered to them, *Rom.* 6. 17. they desire to walk after his Commandment ; they love the word, because it is pure, *Psal.* 119. 140. because it checks and controuleth sin, and they take the Scriptures part against it ; they are pure in heart, and they love God with a pure heart ; they like their carriage and way best, when they walk most circumspectly, and most humbly before God.

3dly, Love, so far as 'tis acted and exercised, worketh against distracting and tormenting fear ; it striveth with, and struggleth against it ; and so far as it is prevailing, so far it overcometh and subdueth that ; and Love, when 'tis compleat, and comes to its absolute,
full

full perfection in Heaven, it will be altogether freed from the Being, Presence and Opposition of distracting fear.

4thly, If there were no Hell to punish the disobedient for their sin, yet God should be served, and that with great care and diligence: Love in the hearts of the godly, is a living and active Principle, and of great potency and usefulness, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, to lead persons in wayes of holiness: Yet so great is the corruption of the heart, and such warring there is of fleshly lusts against the soul, such pelting and haggling at a believer by Satan, that even the fear of God's threatnings of Wrath and Judgement, are of great use to such a person, to keep him from sin. What is here spoken, may something enlighten that place, *Luke 1. 74 That we being delivered from the hands of our Enemies, may serve God without fear, or boldly*: The application of the virtue and benefit of Christ's death to the soul, gives ground to the Believer to come with filial confidence and holy boldness before God: Those that know Christ is theirs, see their warrant, and so have the more free enjoyment of their priviledge; yet others who are in union with Christ, and do not see their happiness, do not thereby lose the right to, and the ground they have of confidence and boldness in God's presence.

And this being dispatcht, let us a little consider some expressions in the Observation a little before repeated, on purpose for the enforcing

forcing of an Exhortation to a reverend and awful serving of God.

Though the Lord do stand in a near relation to his people, and speak in a very friendly and endearing manner to them, yet he is to be feared. Here in the Text 'tis said, He is their God; and up and down in the Scripture you will find the Lord opening his bosome of Love, and taking to himself a great many Names and Titles; which intimate and hold forth the great tenderness of affection which he beareth to them; and such glorious things are spoken of the Believer, as discover that God hath highly exalted him; that since he was precious in his sight, he is become very honorable, and Satan takes an occasion hence to tempt such an one to think more highly of himself than is meet, and to harbour slight and debasing apprehensions of the great God, who hath put all the Dignity and Comeliness upon a Believer that he is invested with; but this must be watched against, and resisted, and all the motions of the corrupt heart, in a way of closure and compliance with the Devil in this matter, as other inordinate luttings, should be very carefully suppressed. God is tender of his honor, and so should we. All along the Scripture **lays** man low, takes off the Crown from his head, and ascribes the glory and praise of all that is good, of all the Believers **Graces**, and Strength, and Privileges, unto the Lord, who alone is worthy of it, and to whom all is due: He that will glory, must glory in God, 1 *Cor.* 1. *last.* We should

should be greatly afraid to feed and nourish any workings of heart, bending and inclining towards the advancement of self, and the diminishing of the esteem and reverence of the great and holy Lord God: Pride is such a Worm, as is apt to breed in the Soul under the highest enjoyments, and under the most clear and large discoveries of God's Will, *2 Cor.* 12. but oh look to it, that you keep a strong guard over your hearts, and use your endeavour to have the eyes of your understanding open, and your Consciences awake, to espye the first movings and appearances of this subtil and encroaching Adversary, which would, if it were possible, dethrone God; it doth indeed, so far as it worketh, debase him; the more awful and submissive the frame and carriage is, the more true honor; and the more meek the Spirit, and the greater the reverence is in our deportment, the greater beauty and ornament is upon us, *1 Pet.* 3. 4. Humility doth put very shining and rich attire and clothing upon a believer, *1 Pet.* 5. 5. 'tis of great price in the sight of God, and commends a man to the Consciences of others; it sets off the Christian profession very much, and is the way to true exaltation; for Christ hath said, *He that humbleth himself, shall be exalted*, *Luke* 14. 11. Oh Brethren, watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. Sanctifie God in your hearts, by making him your fear and dread, *Isa.* 8. 13.

The more you fear him, the more he is exalted by you; and the less there is of this, the
the

the more he is robbed of his glory : Oh be ready with the sword of the spirit to kill, and run through this worm of pride, when you see it first crawling in you : the more you discover of the breaking forth of this corruption, the more, and the more cause you have to loath, and abhor your selves.

I know the Lord hath done much already, and will do greater things yet for a Believer ; while others stand in the outward Court, these are taken into his inward Chamber to walk with the King, in the Galleries of his Love : he doth so manifest himself to them, as not to the world, *John* 14. 22. They have the mind of Christ, *1 Cor.* 2. 16. They have the Spirit of Christ; they are a people in whose heart Gods law is : *Isa.* 51. 11. They are partakers of the divine nature, and have exceeding great and precious promises given to them, *2 Pet.* 1. 4. God is their Father, their Husband, their Friend, their Guide. There be particular expressions in the Scripture to this purpose : There is much that believers may do with God, they have his heart, they have his ear, their interest is great at the Throne of Grace, and God doth bid them come thither boldly ; they have such a prevailing friend in the Court of Heaven, and sitting at the right hand of him that sits upon the Throne, that whatsoever they ask in Faith according to his will, they shall receive : *Heb.* 4. 15, 16. and *1 John* 5. 14. A way being set open by Christ. Believers have free access to the Father by the Son, thorough the Spirit.

But

But now you must take heed to your Spirits that this free love, and rich grace of God be not abused; let not his loving kindness and mercy be any way slighted, and disregarded, upon the view of the priviledges you are exalted to, and the spiritual ornaments which God hath put upon you; let there not be an abatement of holy fear and reverence, but rather a growing and increasing therein: every fresh review and consideration of his benefits, should quicken and provoke to further endeavours after a progress in a holy dread, and awfulness of his Majesty.

And that you may be stirred up hereunto, I shall offer these following particulars to your consideration:

As First of all, think with your selves how the Believers God doth represent himself in the Scripture: he is said to be a mighty God, *Psal. 50. 1. The mighty God hath spoken*; and elsewhere, The great and mighty, and terrible God, *Nehem. 9. 32. Now therefore our God, the great, and mighty, and terrible God, who keepeth Covenant and mercy, &c.* This merciful God, and this Covenant-making, and Covenant-keeping God, is a mighty and terrible God, and there be near the same expressions in *Nehem. 1. 5.* Where the good man *Nehemiah* in his supplication to God, said, *O Lord God of Heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth Covenant and mercy to them that love him*; here by the way note, that it may be of great use in our supplications, to make use of such titles of God, to strike our hearts

hearts with a dread of his Majesty in such approaches to him : how often is terribleness attributed to God in his word? see *Dent.* 10. 16, 17. Where we find a very great duty enjoined, and enforced by this, for God is a God of gods, *Great and terrible.* *Job.* 37. 22. with God is terrible Majesty ; this is one end of the great and glorious appearances of God in his works of providence, that he may be feared, to make himself a name of greatness, and terribleness, as the expression is, *1 Chron.* 17. 21. and see what is mentioned *Dent.* 28. 58. That thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful name of the Lord thy God : and in my Text he is called a consuming fire ; and how much else may be spoken hereabouts? now wherefore is all this? one great end is to shew, that the Lord retains his awful majesty still ; how full, and rich, and large, a Covenant soever he hath made to his people, and how great, and how many spiritual blessings soever he bestows upon his people. And another end may be to check and controul the corrupt workings of heart in a way of slighting, and debasing of God, and to make provision for the preoccupating, and abusing of his grace ; and to provoke to a fearing, and reverencing of his great name : God will have his people to know that his name is Holy, and revered, *Psal.* 111. 9. and he doth call for, and expect affections, and dispositions, and actions suitable to such a title, and to such a manifestation of himself.

Secondly, There is great need of spreading the threatnings of the word even before Believers, and the terrible representations of Gods Majesty to dissuade from sin, and to quicken and spur them up to duty: some of the *Romans* when the Apostle wrote his Epistle to them, were eminent for faith and obedience; and see chap 8. 13. *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die:* and saith Christ to his Disciples, *If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses:* and Luke 12. 4, 5. *And I say to you my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after have no more that they can do? but fear him which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell;* yea, I say to you, fear him: I say to you my friends, this was counsel very good, and proper for them, this was a doctrine very useful and seasonable even for such, and Christ doubles it in his exhortation upon that business of fear, Fear him that can kill the soul, and take good notice of what I speak, I say it again to you, that you may remember and consider it well; *Fear him:* The propounding of Scripture-threatnings may help to the shaking off of the sluggishness of the Believer, and as a whip to stir him up to mend his pace in the way of Gods commandements:

Thirdly, Consider this, that fearing of God is urged upon you in the Scripture, as a great duty, and sometimes by arguments drawn from the terrible Majesty and judgment of God: see *Psal. 34. 9. Fear the Lord*

ye his Saints: 1 Pet. 1. 17. and if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every mans work; pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: Mark here how the Apostle mindeth them of the judgment of God, to awaken and provoke them to diligence; so long as our time lasts, so long we should fear God; not a little only, but all the time of our sojourning should be passed, and spent in the fear of God. The judgment of God should be set before our thoughts, that may conduce and help much to awe us: it may be good to think, God is judge of the world, we must appear before him to give an account: Oh what manner of persons should we be! in the vesse before the Text you are called upon to serve the Lord with fear, and to enforce it upon you, there is propounded to your consideration one of the Titles of God, which is as terrible, and dreadful as any other in the Scripture, if not more dreadful then any other.

Fourthly, 'Tis one of the descriptions, and denominations of gracious persons in the Scripture, that they are such as fear God; and 'tis one brand upon the ungodly, that they fear not God: God hath promised in his new Covenant, that he will put his fear in the hearts of his people, *Jer. 32. 39, 40.* They shall fear me saith God for ever, for their good; the implanting of this grace, is a fruit of Gods former gracious purpose; where is true fear, fear accompanied with hatred of sin, and care

to turn from it, and to walk in all well pleasing to God, This is a new-Covenant-grace, and denotes a new Covenant state; that a person is not onely outwardly, but inwardly in Covenant with God also. 'Tis the ordinary Title of the Godly in the Scripture, That they fear God; this was that which God commanded in *Job*, He was an upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil, *Job* 1. 1 and *Mal.* 4. 2. *Unto you that fear my name will the sun of righteousness arise with healing, &c.* and *Psal.* 66. 16. and in many other places: and the Psalmist stiles himself Gods servant; but how doth that appear? he was Gods fear, *Psal.* 119. 38. As in the original: we render it, devoted to thy fear: and he frequently charged upon the wicked, that they feared not God, *Mal.* 3. 5. *Jer.* 2. 19. Many talk much of the fear of God, and say they fear him, and do live in his fear, of whom the Lord knoweth that there is no true fear of his name in their hearts.

Fifthly, Let this be considered, the more gracious persons have known of God, the clearer and the larger discoveries have been made known to them of his greatness and excellency, the more fear and trembling hath taken hold of them; you may see this in *Isa.* 6. I saw the Lord, saith he, sitting upon a Throne, high and lifted up, *vers.* 1, 2, 3. &c. Then said he, woe is me, I am undone, for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts: How unclean and filthy did he appear then to himself? what a deep sense had he

of his own vileness and unworthiness to appear before God, or to speak to the people from God? And so *Daniel*, a man greatly beloved of God, as the Lord testified of him, *Dan.* 10. 19. when he saw the Vision which we read of in the beginning of the chapter, 'tis said, His comeliness was turned into corruption, *ver.* 8. And so *Hab.* 3. 2. *O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid*; and there is much which follows, setting forth the greatness and the glory of God. And see *ver.* 16. *When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice, rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself.* And what near and intimate Communion with God, had the man *Moses*, to whom the Lord did speak, as one speaketh to his friend? And see what is spoken of him at the time when God descended in fire, and spake out of the midst of the fire, that *Moses* said, *I exceedingly fear and quake.*

6. Let this also be considered, That even *Jesus Christ* himself feared; in *Isa.* 11. 2. it was prophesied of him, The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of Wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord: It may be wondered how any fear should be attributed to Christ, and yet you see some such thing is: Though he were as God, worshipped by the Angels, *Heb.* 1. 6. yet as man, he was Gods Servant, *Isa.* 42. 1. and worshipped God, *John* 11. 41, 42. and did bear a reverent affection unto his Father; and see *Heb.*

5. 7. *In the dayes of his flesh he offered up prayers and supplications, and was heard, in that he feared.*

And I may say further, That a fear of honor and reverence is in the holy Angels, and in the Souls of the glorified Saints, *Isa. 6. 2, 3. Above it stood the Seraphims, and each had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, &c. and Rev. 5. 11, 12, 13, 14.*

8. It was prophesied of the latter dayes, That the sincere worshippers of God should fear the Lord, *Hof. 3. last.* And I might shew you, That there is that in all the Attributes of God, which may serve to make an impress of holy fear and dread upon the heart of a believer, in the Righteousness, and Justice, and Power, and faithfulness of God, and the like: God is a holy God, and therefore to be dreaded; this is that which the Angels celebrated, *Isa. 6.* when they covered their faces, *Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts:* Oh how dreadful is the Immensity of Gods Purity and Holiness! See *Psal. 99. 3.* The Lord is great in Zion; let them praise thy great and terrible Name, for it is holy. God is to be praised and admired for his holiness, and he is to be praised with reverence and trembling, *Exod. 15. 11. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness, and fearful in praises?*

And so the Truth of God may serve to strike awe and reverence in you. *Rev. 15. 3, 4. Just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints; who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorifie thy Name?*

Name? And so we may say of the Mercy of God, *Psal. 130. 4. There is forgiveness with thee; that thou mayest be feared.* But I shall not enlarge further upon this.

Now again therefore be exhorted to serve God with fear: Oh cherish and maintain this holy, pious affection, grow in this Grace of God, be afraid of sinning against him; keep such a fear of God awake in thy soul; give the reverence which is due to his Sacred Majesty. Look upon the fear of God as a rich Treasure, *Isa. 33. 6* yea, better than any earthly Treasure: Gather more of this Treasure, and this will make thee more holy; the Fear of the Lord is clean, *Psal. 19. 9.* that may be understood of the Word, the rule of Fear, which is pure, and free from all pollution and defilement; but the Grace of Fear is also of great usefulness for further purifying and cleansing of the believers soul, *Prov. 16. 6. By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.* And *2 Cor. 7. 1. Let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting of holiness in the fear of God.*

This is the way to be more humble, to have your spirits sloop and submit more to God, and to be more humble in your carriage one towards another, submitting your selves one to another in the fear of the Lord This is a way to be better Husbands, and better Wives, and better Servants, to fill up your Personal and Relation-Duties better: *Ephes. 6. 5. 1 Pet. 2. 18. 1 Pet. 3. 2. Servants obey your Masters with fear and trembling, in singleness*

of heart, as unto Christ. And this is a way to come to a farther understanding of the Will of God revealed in his Word. *Job 28. 28. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* Men are never spiritually wise, till they begin truly to fear ; and as they grow in fear , so they are like to follow on to know God ; you being Children in Fear, you are Children in Understanding. But to speak a little more particularly :

Prov. 15.
33.

First of all , Fear the great and glorious God alwayes, in every part, and throughout the course of thy life , *Prov. 23. 17.* all the day long, yea all the time thou spendest here upon the earth. We read in *Acts 9. 31.* of believers walking in the fear of the Lord ; every step of thy life should be towards God, and a walking with God ; and those that walk with God , should be still in the fear of the holy God , who is devouring fire, *Prov. 28. 14. Blessed is the man that feareth alway ; but he that hardeneth his heart , shall fall into mischief.*

2. Serve God with fear and reverence , in every act of the solemn , religious Worship, which thou dost yeild to him ; there is much in the Scripture to this purpose : *Psal. 89. 7, God is greatly to be feared in the Assembly of his Saints, and to be had in reverence of them that are about him.* And so *Eccles. 5. 1, 2.* Keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of God ; be not rash with thy mouth , for God is in Heaven , and thou art upon the earth : Look to the workings of thy heart and affections,

ctions, sanctifie and exalt God in them; let
 the whole inner man kneel, and fall down and
 lye prostrate before him; labour to have thy
 soul possessed with great awfulness of his Ma-
 jesty; and let thy outward carriage suit and
 correspond with such an inward frame: You
 must not go to worship, as if you had to do
 with your equals; but come before the high
 and Sovereign Majesty of Heaven and Earth,
 with all humility and lowliness of heart, re-
 membring what low Earth-worms you are;
 Consider well that Scripture, *Psal. 68. last.*
 God is terrible out of his holy places, he hath
 appeared against the irreverent usage of his
 holy institutions; his Judgments have testi-
 fied his displeasure against this thing; you
 know the *Corinthians* were very faulty as to
 this matter, particularly, with respect to the
 Ordinance of the Lords Supper, and Gods
 anger did break forth against them for it,
*1 Cor. 11. 30. For this cause many are weak and
 sickly among you, and many sleep.* Though God
 will spare the Souls of such as believe, yet he
 may have a fore controversie with his people
 as to outward Judgments, for the slightness of
 their Spirits in his Worship, for that they are
 no more serious, no more reverent in their
 addressesto him, he may smite them with
 Sicknes, yea, with Death for this thing;
 though it be little considered by many who
 have laboured under such and such bodily di-
 stempers, yet they may be chastisements from
 God for their Worship sins. Oh, the low and
 mean thoughts that we have had of the most

high and great God! how little suitableness hath there been in our conceptions and imaginations, to the discoveries which are made of this holy and glorious God in the Scripture, when we have been speaking to God, and hearing from God? how may it fill the heart with shame and sorrow to think how unbecoming, and unmeet, and unsuitable our apprehensions have been to what hath been spoken with the mouth, and sounded in the ear? Oh! we must needs say, We have offended greatly in this matter, and God's forbearance is wonderful.

And now do you learn to humble yourselves more in his sight, to serve him with greater reverence and godly fear.

1. Look to it in prayer, whether your Addresses be private by your selves, or more publick and joint, with others. How humble and lowly was *Abraham* in his requests? *Gen.* 18. 26. *Behold, I have taken upon me to speak, which am but dust and ashes.* And so *Jacob*, *Gen.* 32. 10. *I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and the truth which thou hast shewed to thy servant.* And their inward frames and apprehensions, were suited to their outward expressions. And when *David* did set himself to speak to God, of which we read *2 Kings* 7. 18. he said, *Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* Now for the impressing of an holy fear, it may be of great use in our supplications, to make mention of some of the glorious titles of God; and this we find often in the pray-

ers of holy persons, which are recorded in the Scripture.

2. Look to it in the reading and hearing of God's Word, that you be serious and awful in your spirits, under the Word of this terrible and glorious God. *Josiah* the King had a very tender frame when he heard the Words of the Law; and he did humble himself, and weep before God, *2 Chron. 34. 27.* and the Lord did observe it, and speak comfortably to him by the Prophetess *Huldah*, and told him, That the Judgments threatned in the Book, should not come upon the Land in his days. And in the Book of *Ezra*, such as were godly, and forward in the reformation-work there spoken of, are described to be such as trembled at the Commandment of the Lord, *Ezra 9. 4. Ezra 10. 3.* and *Ezra* himself set down astonished, because of the sins that were among them. And the *Psalmist* said, that his heart did stand in awe of the Word of God, *Psal. 119. 161:* And *Isa. 66. 2.* the Lord promises to look with an eye of love and favour upon such as are of a contrite spirit, and tremble at his Word: Upon him that trembleth at God's Word, he shall be as much cared for, and look't after by God, as if there were no other person in the world. Oh that we may come to have our hearts more awed by God's Word, and to fear and tremble at his Commandment more; 'tis high time to be more serious, and more awful Worshipers of God; let us leave off trifling in such weighty and important matters: We should
be

be grave, and solid, and serious in our whole carriage, and therefore sure we must not dally with God's solemn Worship.

And so I might shew, 3^{dly}, That there should be a great awfulness upon our Spirits, in receiving, when we come to the Lords Table to feast upon the Royal Dainties which Christ hath provided for his Spouse : A light and vain Spirit, and lightness of carriage is not meet at any time ; and who will not condemn it, if a child should use such where the dead Body of his Father lies before him? but now would not a frothy, vain spirit, and an irreverent carriage, be much more unbecoming, when Christ is held forth as crucified before our eyes? when his dead body, as it were, ly'es before us? I speak not this, as if I did apprehend the bread in the Sacrament to be Christ's Body, in the Popish sense ; no : But yet I say, in a Sacramental sense, the Bread is Christ's Body, and the Cup is his Blood ; Christ said of the bread, *This is my body* ; and in our Administrations we should conform to Christs Example, and say, That the Bread is Christs Body ; take away the Sacramental relation between the bread and Christs Body, and what becomes of the Sacrament? 'Tis not bare bread that we go thither for ; we go to feed upon Christ, upon a broken, bruised and crucified Saviour : Christ said, when he gave the bread, *This is my Body* ; Look beyond the Element ; I offer and give my self : Let thy hand of Faith take me, with all my Benefits ; and thy mouth of Faith feed upon me, thy Je-
sus,

fus, thy Saviour, who dyed for thee, who was
 bruised for thy transgressions. This by the
 way : But now I say, shall we come to such a
 Feast, where be such visible representations of
 Christ's bloody death, and bitter passion, and
 shall not our eye affect our hearts ? Shall we
 not serve God there with fear, and rejoice
 with trembling, when we hear of his terrible
 Justice, and of his great displeasure for sin,
 and have such Ocular Demonstrations of it
 before us ? What deep seriousness, what re-
 verence and humility, what great awfulness
 doth such an Ordinance call for ?

But now farther, to draw towards a con-
 clusion of this branch of the Exhortation,
 Labour after more of this awful frame and
 carriage, and yet after more ; rest in no at-
 tainments herein, but proceed from one de-
 gree to another ; be earnest with God to u-
 nite your hearts to fear him, to solidate, and
 fix, and compose your spirits more and more,
 to make you see more of his excellency and
 greatness, and also of your own unworthi-
 ness ; to urge upon your spirits the weight
 of holy duties, and the importance of grave,
 reverend and deep seriousness of the whole
 course of your Profession, with respect to his
 Honor, the credit of Religion, and the good
 influence this may have upon your own and
 others souls : Pray hard for it, and watch a-
 gainst vain, idle discourse, and be much in
 converse with the most serious Christians, and
 let all such as fear God, be encouraged to
 hold on, and abound therein, by consider-
 ing,

ing, that God hath said, he will encamp about such as fear him, *Psal.* 34. 7. and that there shall be no want to such, *ver.* 9. and that his Salvation is nigh to them, *Psal.* 85. 9. and that he pitieth them, *Psal.* 103. 11, 17. and elsewhere, God is said to take pleasure in such, and to fulfil the desire of them that fear him.

2dly, Another thing that I would exhort you to, who are in a state of freedom from revenging wrath and fury, shall be this: Set your selves, as God in his Providence shall administer the occasion and opportunity to help those what you can, out of their sinful condition, who are impenitent and unbelieving yet, and so under an actual liableness to be devoured and destroyed by this consuming fire: Hath God shewn mercy to thy soul? go thou, and shew mercy and compassion to the souls of others: If it were but an outward temporal Judgment that they were in danger of, thou shouldst stand in the gap, and labour what thou canst, to turn away the fierceness of God's wrath; and should you not put forth your earnest endeavours to hinder and prevent their eternal ruine? If they were asleep any where, and thou didst see a fire near them, and they were like to be consumed thereby, if thou didst not awaken them; even common pity would move in such a condition, and stir up thy bowels, and hasten thee towards them, and then thou wouldst call aloud to them; and if that would not do, thou wouldst lay hands upon them, and pull them away from the fire, and never leave till thou hadst

hadst awakened, and delivered them : if they
 were in a house, and the door were shut up-
 on them in such a case, if there were no way
 of rousing them up, thou wouldst break open
 the door, and thrust in upon them, and not
 let a person go frying out of the world, if it
 were in the power of thy hand to help them :
 what do ye mean then, that there is no more
 diligence and faithfulness used towards those
 who are shut up under guilt, and under a
 curse? *Gal. 5. 22.* compared with the 13. verse:
 and lye fast asleep, having a spirit of slum-
 ber, and for any thing thou knowest, if thou
 let them alone a little longer, may be burn-
 ing in the fire of hell ; nay, within a day or
 an hour ? What, are thy tender mercies shut
 up ? are thy bowels restrained ? halt thou har-
 dned thy self like an Ostrich in the wilder-
 ness, that thou art so much wanting in the
 help that thou shouldst offer, and in the pity
 that thou shouldst exercise towards them ?
 Though it be not in the power of thy hand
 to reconcile them to God, to justify and
 sanctifie them, yet there is much which thou
 mayest do in an ordinary way, and by ordi-
 nary assistance, which for any thing thou
 canst tell, God may make use of as a means
 to bring them unto a state of favour and
 friendship with himself. *1 Cor. 7. 16.* What
 knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save
 thy husband ? or how knowest thou, O man,
 whether thou shalt save thy wife ? and so I
 may say with respect to brothers and sisters,
 and other relations, and also with respect to
 such

such as are not in any near bond of affinity or consanguinity allyed to thee: see what is mentioned in Jude 22, 23. *On some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire:* 'Tis not enough to look after your own Salvation, but you should seek the Salvation of others also; but in your attempts about this matter, you should exercise Christian prudence: some should be handled more gently, others with more sharpness and severity, according to their frame. Pulling them out of the fire; 'tis said, ἀπαλόμενοι, snatching them out of the fire; you should deal plainly with all, and not onely bear compassion to their souls, but shew compassion; let your serious and earnest endeavours in your treaties with them about the matters of Salvation, be a real discovery of the inward desires of your hearts, that they may escape the everlasting burnings.

But some may say, what course would you have us to take for the reclaiming and recovering of the ungodly?

I answer; First of all, labour to get thy heart more affected with their condition; and to this purpose recollect what hath been spoken in this discourse of the terribleness of Gods wrath: and think what it is to be dead in sin; to lye bound hand and foot in the grave-clothes of corruption, to be a vassal of Satan, and to be so surrounded and compassed with curses, that whithersoever they look or turn, the curse of God is before them, and the like: There being so little sensibleness of
their

their misery, no wonder that thy endeavours are so weak and small for their recovery.

2. Commend their cases to God by earnest, fervent, and importunate Prayer: intreat him who is mighty to save, and who is able to save to the uttermost, all those that come to God by him; that he would open his everlasting arms of mercy, and receive such into his favour; that he would send forth his conquering, and prevailing-grace, to make such willing; that he would make bare his Almighty Arm, and draw such and such unto Christ, that they perish not, but have everlasting life: the effectual, or as it is in the Greek, the inwrought prayer of a righteous person availeth much, *James* 5. 16. Pray for them, but pray as you ought to pray, pray in the Holy Ghost; mourn over them, and pour out your sighs and groans for them; lift up your souls to God, pour out your hearts before him in your addresses for them; *Moses* would not let God alone when his wrath burned, and waxed hot against the people, *Exod.* 32. 10, 11, 12. and 31, 32, 33. Oh how earnest and importunate was he in his supplication, when God did speak of consuming them! why, saith *Moses*, doth thy wrath wax hot? and then he pleads the concernments of Gods glory; and afterwards, turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil; and God did not cut off that nation, though there were indeed some who fell by the sword of the *Levites*, as we read

read in the same chapter. Ah! if Believers did mend their prayers, if they had more faith, and more gracious affections, if they did strive and wrestle, and labour more earnestly in prayer for a blessing; if their prayers were more inwrought, the holy breathings of the Spirit in their hearts more, who can tell but God may answer them in converting more sinners from the error of their way. see *Rom. 10. 1. Brethren*; saith the Apostle *Paul*, whose bowels yerned over the poor unbelieving Jews, *My heart's desire and Prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved*: He did pray for them, and his heart went along with his tongue; Oh set your hearts to seek God, for those that are at enmity against him: the *Ninivites* took encouragement to do what they did in fasting, and outward reformation, from a May-be, or who can tell? *Jon. 3. 9.* Let us do this and that, who can tell? or who knoweth? God may turn and repent, and he may turn himself from the heat or fierceness of his wrath, that we perish not: And God did spare them for some time longer; and so who knoweth if thou struggle hard in Prayer for such, but God may turn from his hot wrath, that such and such die not in their sins, nor perish. When God told *Abraham* that he would destroy *Sodom*, *Abraham* prayed for *Lot*. And see what is said *Gen. 19. 29.* *And it came to pass when God destroyed the Cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the Cities in the*

the which Lot dwelt: and who can tell but God may remember thee, and in rich mercy shew favour and compassion to some or other, that they be not consumed.

2. Faithfully discharge thy duty in reproving them, *Levit. 19. 17. Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon them.* Do not fail to declare and testify against the evil thou knowest by them, and do it in such a manner as that they may see thou art in earnest, catch at the first season; if thou forbear now, he may be in another world to morrow: and besides, sin being of a hardening nature, the longer a person doth go on in it, the closer shut his ear may be against instruction. Say to the wicked, it will go ill with them; cry out, Oh do not this abominable thing: Wherefore do ye thus requite the Lord? Is this the use you put his many mercies and long-suffering to, to rebel thus against him? Iniquity will return upon their heads who continue in it. Take heed what you do, Gods word is against such and such a thing; and Gods faithfulness is bound to execute the threatnings which he hath denounced against the wicked: God is furious, the Lord reserveth wrath for his enemies, or the like, *Nahum. 1. 2.* God is angry with them every day, *Psal. 7. 11.* Their sin is bound up, in due time it will bring forth to the impenitent, the bitter fruit of eternal sorrow.

3. Exhort and counsel them, and plead the cause of God and his truth with them; commend before them the way of holiness,

and make them what you can, to understand it: Say, this and that hath the Lord spoken, here is the right path, walk in it. Harken and consider, set your hearts to the word of the Lord: acquaint them with the danger of an unconverted state; and the necessity of a gracious change in order to salvation: tell them, that if they come not to be born the second time, they will one day wish they had never been born, that their mothers had had a miscarrying womb, that they had never seen the light of one day. Plead and expostulate the case with them; How have you spent your time? what provision have you made for death and judgment? would you leave the world, and appear before a holy God in the state you now are? what are you the better for the service the Devil and your lusts have had from you? can you think this or that is the end, for which the Lord did send you into the world? what harm would Christ and pure Religion do you? what profit would it be if you should gain all the whole world and lose your own souls? do you think God will be mocked? will a little Lip-labour, and Ear-service content and please him, who is spirit, and saith he will be worshipped in spirit and in truth? would you not die the death of those that fear God? why do your souls then abhor to live their life? do not you say that Christ is your Master and Lord? where then is your fear? To this purpose deal with sinners; urge upon their consciences what you know God doth require; and charge them from God, who will
judg.

judge the quick and the dead, to lay it up in their hearts, and ponder upon it, and to hold it forth in their lives : Tell them, that the ungodly are under a Covenant of works, and that such must come naked before the Bar of God's Justice, and have nothing to stand between the fiery and burning wrath of God, and them; that the good meanings, and good intentions which the wicked do speak of, are not accepted by God, their way and course being bad, and they being out of Christ, and such as do not seek God's honor and glory : Let them know, That such as regard iniquity in their hearts, have not their prayers heard. Ah! if there were more seriousness and life in admonishing & exhorting, who knows of what use and advantage it may be, through Gods blessing, for the winning of souls?

4. Be sure, and set a good example before them; When words are slighted and scorned, a holy and religious conversation possibly may be sanctified by God for the convincing and reclaiming of some who do not yet obey the truth, 1 Pet. 3. 1. and 1 Pet. 2. 12. *You that are children of light, walk in the light; let your light* Mat. 5. 16. *so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify God.* The daughters of Jerusalem observing how the Spouse had enlarged, and expatiated in the praises of Christ, and how earnest she was in her enquiry, and in her following after him, Cant. 5. 8. to the end, she was much taken and allured with it, and said, chap. 6. 1. *Whither is thy Beloved gone, that we may seek him with thee?* A good conversation is a standing and abiding reproof; words may be forgotten, but this is a continual confutation

and instruction; this may hold the word before mens eyes, and bring many things to remembrance; and though for the present we see no good of it, as to conversion, upon any; yet we may afterwards: and therefore be not weary in well-doing, nor in exhorting and reproof, but do it in all long-suffering, and let me tell you, though no saving-good should come to others by the means of it, yet you must do your duty; and this I say also, your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord; and if God's Mercy be not glorified in the salvation of such and such, yet his Justice may be much glorified hereby in their destruction.

Take these following Motives to quicken you.

First of all, See how busie and industrious sinners are to hold their fellow sinners fast entangled in the snare? And shall not Saints be as careful, yea, should not they be more active and diligent, to set them at liberty? Should not they do as much, yea more, to win Souls, than others do to destroy Souls? Do the wicked labour to bind on the Cords of sin upon one another faster? and shall not you labour to break them? shall they do more for Satan, than you for God? The more pains others take to draw them into the fire, the more pity should this move in you to pluck them back.

2^{dly}, Did not gracious persons shew compassion of this kind upon you, before your conversion? Go you, and do likewise to others, *Cant. 1. 4. Draw me, saith the Spouse, and we will run after thee:* Run my self, & labour to draw others.

3^{dly}, Consider, Were not they encouraged and strengthened in their ways of sin by you, when

when you were in the like state? and did not you run with them to the same excess of riot? And now God hath extended mercy to you, should not you do their souls that right, to endeavour their recovery from a state and course of sin? should not you undo, what you can, the burdens which you have put on? and throw down the evil you have built up? have you helped to destroy? and shall not you help to save? The Apostle *Paul* before his conversion destroyed the Christian Faith what he could, but afterward he preached it, *Gal. 1.* he had joined with others against Christ, and afterwards he laboured abundantly to draw others to Christ, *1 Cor. 15. 10.* you hindered much good work, now labour to further such: did not you labour to make others evil affected to the ways of God? Now labour to make them well affected to them. The *Psalmist* prayed God to create in him a clean heart; and then he saith, *he would teach transgressors, and sinners should be converted to him; Psal. 51. 10, 13.* Have not you taught others to do evil, by giving corrupt counsel, and by leading a corrupt course of Life? Make a kind of spiritual restitution to them, by giving holy counsel, leading a holy course of life: it may be God may prosper thy endeavours, so that others may be added to the Church, who may pour out believing prayers for it, and the Angels hereupon may come to rejoice in Heaven, and the number of such may be encreased, in whom God will be admired, and who shall ascribe praise, honor and glory to him in Heaven for ever; but I shall pass this over,

And now to conclude this part of the Exhortation also, Let Religious Parents put forth strong and earnest endeavours, that their children may escape the everlasting burnings, and gracious children, that their unconverted Parents may; and so for other relations, Husbands, and Wives, and Masters, and Servants, and the like: Wouldst thou not have the person who hath lain in the same womb, or lodged in the same bed, or eaten and drunken with thee, be received into the same Mansions of glory? It may be thy Father, Mother, Child, Brother, Sister, Wife, Husband, is a Child of Wrath, and so subject to fall into the revenging hands of God, where is thy Love? Let it put thee upon doing what in thee lies, to save them; and so for others, they are the same flesh with thee, *Isa.* 58. Oh hide not the eyes of thy spiritual pity and compassion from thy own flesh; is not every one thy neighbour? and shouldst not thou love thy neighbour as thy self? *Mat.* 19. 19. Let Love shew it self; love not in word only, but in deed; is this love, to see a man in the way to Hell, and not give him warning, to take heed that he perish not? Let love be working and endeavouring his conversion, that so a soul may be saved, and a multitude of sins covered, *Jam.* 5. *last*. And be sure in all thou doest, to look up to God for his blessing; we could not convert our selves, much less can we convert others; we can't make a hair white or black; nor add a cubit to our stature, much less can we make a new creature; this is Gods Workmanship, and not ours, *Eph.* 2. 10. what good is done by us, 'tis of his free-grace, and let him have

have the glory. And thus much also for the second branch of the Exhortation.

The last Use, and which I intend also quickly to pass over, shall be a Use of Consolation to the sound and thorow Believer : Is God a consuming fire? Be of good chear, this God is thy God, his revenging wrath is appeased towards thee ; *there is no condemnation to such as are in Christ*, Rom. 8. 1. this fire shall not burn thee down to Hell ; thy soul is in sure keeping, and shall not be lost.

First of all, The Father will not be a consuming fire to thee, for he loveth thee, *Joh. 14. 21. and 17. 23. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me. He hath loved them, and given his Son to them, John 3. 16. and given them to his Son, John 17. 6. he gave them to Christ to save them, and therefore he will not destroy them; He hath justified them, and reconciled them to himself, 2 Cor. 5. 19. and therefore he will not condemn them; he hath prepared for them a Kingdom, therefore you may be sure they shall inherit it.*

2. Jesus Christ will not be a consuming fire to them, *for he hath given himself for them, and to them ; he hath laid down his life to free them from eternal death, he will not lose his blood, he will not lose his purchase; he that is the Author, will be the Finisher of your Faith, Heb. 12. 2. He that laid the foundation, will carry on the building, John 6. 37. All that the Father giveth to me, saith Christ, shall come to me ; and he that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. See ver. 39. And this is the Fathers will which hath sent*

me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day; and v. 40. Rom. 5. 8, 9. God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ dyed for us; much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath, through him. Christ the Judge is righteous, and will not condemn those whom he hath acquitted; the Head will not condemn his Members; where I am, saith Christ, there shall you be; I'll take you to my self; and elsewhere, they shall be for ever with the Lord: Comfort one another with these words, 1 *Thess* 4. last.

3. The Holy Ghost will not be a consuming fire to them: He hath joined them to Christ, brought them into a state of union, from which follows communion in the merits and benefits of Christ here, with respect to saving-Grace, and spiritual Priviledges; and hereafter with respect to glory; and one End to bring them to Christ, was, that he may save them; and he will not afterwards destroy them: The Spirit hath taken up his dwelling in a Believer, and he will not consume his own house and habitation, with the fire of his revenging fury. The Holy Spirit hath sanctified the Believer, and this Sanctification is the way, and done by the holy Spirit in order to Salvation, 2 *Thess*. 2. 13. *The pure in heart shall see God*; they shall lift up their faces at the last great day of Judgment, without spot. Holiness is an evidence of election and Gods election shall obtain; not one of those that are written in the Lambs Book of Life, shall be lost; Christ will look to it, that they have the Kingdom to which they are appointed. The holy Spirit

spirit hath made the Believer a Vessel meet for the Heavenly Masters use; he hath prepared them for good works here, 2 *Tim.* 2. 21. and they shall be found meet when they pass hence, for the inheritance of the Saints in light; and sure he will not turn such among the Vessels of dishonor and wrath: But a little more in another particular, may be spoken about the Holy Ghost, and I shall pass it over here.

But now further, to demonstrate this, That God will not be a consuming fire to the Believer, see *Isa.* 27. 4. where the Lord saith, *Fury is not in me*: I shall not stand to open that Scripture, but this I say, God is pacified towards a believer, and there is no revenging fury in God for him to come under: Indeed in the Scripture we do read sometimes of Gods being angry with such and such a particular gracious person; God may be displeased, and lay his hand heavy upon them in temporal chastisements: What *David* had done in the matter of *Uriah*, very much offended the Lord; and we read of some great outward distress which came afterwards upon him: God may make his people smart here in this life, he may let out such a sense of his displeasure upon their souls, as that they may cry out of broken bones, and that the Arrows of the Almighty drink up their spirits, *Psal.* 51. and see *Psal.* 38. his darts may stick so fast, and his hand press them so sore, that they may have no rest for a great while in their bones, because of their sin; they may be feeble, and sore broken, and come to roar by reason of the disquietness of their spirits; and their way without, may be hedged up with thorns; they may find much perplexity and trouble on the
right

right hand, and on the left hand; the Adversary may be suffered so far to prevail against them, as to spoil them of their Liberty, of their Estates, of their Countrey, of their Life; but now yet, as to troubles in this life, there is a great deal of difference between believers, and such as abide still in their impenitency and unbelief: Gods anger to the former is Fatherly, and rooted in love; afflictions, though evil in themselves, are through Christ sanctified, and are part of the Childrens portion; the Rod is a Covenant and blessed Rod, Christ is Mediator for them with respect to the Rod, and he will manage their afflictions for their good, *Rom. 8. 28.* Afflictions to such are not in a way of revenge, to take satisfaction of them for sin; indeed affliction even with respect to the godly, may be called fire; *I came*, saith Christ, *to send a fire upon earth*, *Luke 12. 49.* and so *Zech. 13. 9.* and *I will bring the third part through the fire*: But now God hath a very gracious & merciful Design in all, for it follows, *and will refine them as silver is refined*. Christ doth sit as a Refiner, as a Refiner among such, to purifie them; this is the fruit of all, to take away sin, to humble and cleanse them. And therefore let not the believers heart faint under the cross; let not him be weary of the chastisement of the Lord, nor despise it, *Heb. 12. 5.* *God is coming with much good towards you; Fathers of your flesh have corrected you, and you gave them reverence; shall you not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? they for a few dayes chastened you, after their own pleasure, he for your profit, that ye may be partakers of his holiness*, ver. 9, 10. Do not judge of things by the dictate of sense, that represents affliction

as hurtful, because of the pain and grievousness to the body; live by faith; though there be grief caused now, yet afterwards this will yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby, *Heb. 12. 11*. But now to the reprobate, afflictions are effects of Divine vengeance, they are part of the curse, and their sorrow here will end in everlasting sorrow hereafter; prosperity and adversity, every condition is an accursed condition to them; but now as to those who are reconciled to God, their evil things are past, when death comes, though here persecuted and afflicted, yet hereafter they shall be comforted; all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes, and all sorrow be removed far from their hearts; the second death shall have no power over them, death is theirs to befriend them, *1 Cor. 3. 22*. when the old rags of Mortality are laid aside, the new robes of glory shall be put on; when the decayed house of this earthly tabernacle is thrown down, they shall have a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, *2 Cor. 5. 10*. Death puts them into the immediate embraces of their dear Redeemer, from whom they shall then never part more; Death is their gain; for when they shall be absent from the body, they shall be present with the Lord. See *Rev. 14. 13*. *And I heard a voice from Heaven saying to me, Write, blessed are the dead which dye in the Lord, from henceforth, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them.* [From henceforth] this is much to be considered, for this place seems to respect some of the last troubles by Antichrist; *here is the faith and patience of the Saints*: Let believers now quit themselves like men; how courageously have the

Lambs

Lambs followers endured the fiery trial from this Adversary heretofore? Oh let not Saints shrink in the latter end of the day, now the combate is near over; be of good chear, be valiant for the Truth, hold out faith and patience; may not the eye of faith see Christ yonder with a Crown, saying, *To him that overcomes, will I give it?* what glorious Conquerors through Christ that loved them, have others that have gone before you, been? the same promises may afford you encouragement; the same strength of God is engaged for your help 'tis but a little brunt more, a cloud that will quickly be over, and there shall be a full reward to them that love Christ, and are faithful to death, oh be followers of them, who thorow faith and patience, have inherited the promises, *Heb. 6. 12.* But I shall pass this over.

And now to draw towards a close of this subject, thou that art the Friend of God, rejoice in him, yea, shout for joy. And there is something further which I have to offer, to move and quicken thee thereunto.

First, because the Lord doth, and will defend thee, *Psal. 5. 11.* ever rejoice, even this title of consuming fire may afford matter of consolation to thee in this respect, consolation in that this mighty God doth incamp about thee to protect thee. *Dent. 9. 2, 3.* Hear, O Israel, thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to possess Nations greater then thou, a people great and tall, the children of the Anakims of whom thou hast heard say, who can stand before the children of Anak? Understand therefore this day, that the Lord thy God is he, which goeth over before thee as a consuming fire, he shall bring them down before thy face and destroy them; The Churches e-

nemies

enemies are many, and they are strong and lively;
Isa. 38.19. How are they increased that are
 ready to bend their bow, and shoot their arrows,
 even bitter words? how many temptations may
 you fall into, yet count it all joy? *Jam.* 1.2. He
 knows how to sanctifie all, and how to deliver his
 people, if he see meet, out of all; *2 Pet.* 2.9. Though
 you do not know which way deliverance will a-
 rise, and when; yet God knows both: leave your
 selves and business with him; unburden your souls
 of all your troubles, and cast all your care upon
 God, for he careth for you, *1 Pet.* 5. 7. He will
 make way for your escape, when he sees meet;
 your work should be to study, and do your pre-
 sent Duty under this Providence, and look after
 the improvement of it for the good of your souls;
 now and consider this, that *Sions* enemies are but
 as chaff; and though there were never such great
 heaps of chaff, yet consuming fire can pass
 through all, and bring about your Salvation. Trust
 in the Lord, and you shall be established, *2 Chron.*
 20. 20. be sure you do not discredit your selves
 & your profession, by the use of unlawful means:
 go not out of Gods way, lest he consume you
 with a temporal destruction; commit all your af-
 fairs unto him: stand still and see his Salvation:
 vengeance belongeth to him, and let him alone to
 repay it. You have his promise of protection, *Zac.*
 2.5. *For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of*
fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of
her: comfort your selves with these words, who is
it speaks to the Believer? I, saith the Lord, will do it,
I Jehovah, who will put a being into my promises; I
who am Almighty, and Al-sufficient, these are my true
and faithful words: But the Church may say, we
 lie.

lie open to destroying adversaries? no saith God *He be a wall to you*; but it may be replied, may not the adversary break through and consume us? to his peril be it, saith God, as it were, *If he set himself against you, I'll be a wall of fire, I'll burn him for his labour, who is an implacable oppressor of my people*; God is a Wall to his people, and he is higher then the highest of men: and he is a wall of fire, what will the stubble get by contending with the fire: however, some particular believers may fall by a temporal stroke, whether by the sword, or the flame, or captivity, *Dan. 11. 33.* or what other way, when Antichrists rage against the Churches, breaketh out more, yet God will have a people to serve him, *Psal. 22. 30.* such as hate the righteous shall sooner or later be desolate, *Psal. 34. 21.*

2. Consider, this consuming fire shall be turned against thy corruptions, yea, and shall at length quite consume them: an utter consumption or abolition of the being of sin, I do not expect in this life; a partial consumption of your lusts, there is already; the sting of sin is destroyed, as to Believers, its condemning power consumed, (but a little of that in the last particular) its reigning power is consumed too, as to such, *Rom. 6. 14. Mic. 7. 19. They are Baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*, as if it had been said, with the holy Ghost, whose work and property is to refine, and purifie as fire doth; he doth purifie to himself a peculiar people, he doth purge away filth, remove dross and tin, and upon that account, is called a spirit of burning, *Isa. 4. 4.* and hereby the spirit fits & prepares a people for communion with God here, & hereafter. The Spirit of God will not burn up your graces, that is his own work; he will cherish and nourish

purish them; but he will consume your corruptions, destroy those works of the devil, in doing what I before mentioned, in subduing your sins, and in sanctifying you, he hath begun this work already, and he will carry it on, and he will never leave it till the work of grace be perfected with glory: and till there be a thorough riddance of all gross, till all spots and defilements be washed off: Oh then intreat God that he would turn his hand upon your lusts, and corruptions, which you are so much haunted and pestered, to consume them; pray, Lord spare my soul, but destroy my sins; let them perish, but let me live.

3. The Lord who is free, will enlighten you, he will teach and instruct you: fire you know doth give light, and God hath set up some light in your understandings already; he hath shewn you the right way, and hath inclined your hearts to it *John 2. 20.* you have an unction from the holy one, and you know the truth as it is in Jesus; you are renewed in knowledg, and he will be a guide; his Spirit shall further lead and conduct you: God both in some sort, as it were still, go before his people in a pillar of fire by day, and by night; he hath written to you his word, which may be a light to your feet, and a lamp to your path, *Psf. 119. 105.*

4. Consider this, fire doth warm and heat, and so the holy fire, and holy heat, that is in the hearts of the Godly, is from the Lord; love and zeal with respect to the habit of them, are fruits of the Spirit, *Gal. 5. 22.* every good gift is from him; 'tis he who quickens and enlivens, who warms & heats, and refreshes your spirits at any time: Oh for more of this holy heat in this cold and dead season! pray Lord quicken us, blow up the fire, revive

Give thy own work, put more life, more strength
 into thy people, Oh fire all our sacrifices : whilst
 we are meditating on the Scripture, and whilst we
 are reading, and hearing the Scripture, Let our
 hearts burn within us, *Luke 24. 32.* make us lively,
 and very sensible Christians : let not thy word
 lye as a dead letter in us, but let it be as fire, for
 burning, and working in us, as that we may not
 forbear the doing of thy will, whatever we may
 suffer for our faithfulness to thee, *Jer. 20.* Oh that
 we may yet awaken, and shake, and stir up our
 selves to lay hold upon God: remember what the
 Lord saith, Be zealous and repent, *Rev. 3. 19.* and
 elsewhere, Be not slothful in business, but fervent
 in spirit, serving God, *Rom. 12.* May this fire en-
 flame your love, raise your faith, and heighten
 your zeal for God and his truth.

Lastly, Consider for your comfort, that the fire of hell
 which the wrath of God hath kindled, shall not consume
 you : we read *Dan. 3.* That the smell of the fire did not pass
 upon the three children ; well, be of good cheer, not so
 much as the smell of Hell-fire shall pass upon any part
 of you ; see *Mal. 1. 3.* God will spare his Jewels, he will not
 throw them into the fire, he hath prepared a better place for
 them, *Mal. 4. 1. 2.* Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, that shall
 burn as an oven : it shall burn the wicked, but unto you (saith
 God) that fear my name, shall the sun of righteousness arise
 with healing in his wings ; I shall not stand to open this scrip-
 ture : To be sure at the last judgment it shall be most per-
 fectly consummated. Christs coming will be happy and com-
 fortable to all that fear him ; he will reckon such worthy to
 escape the dreadful things that shall come upon others, and
 to stand before the Son of God, and to be ever with him
 to behold his glory.

Finis.

The PRINTER to the READER.

The Author of this Treatise did not oversee the Press, because of
 his great distance from it ; and the hand was not so legible as we
 wished, which has occasioned some Errata's to have passed therein,
 yet we hope they are not so many, nor so great, but that (Courteous
 Reader) you may easily correct them in your own reading.

The woman of Portsmouth p. 100.